

**ENGLISH AND AMERICAN  
PHILOSOPHY SINCE 1800**





## PREFACE

In making an attempt to estimate the philosophical ideas of the last century and a quarter, I have endeavored as a historian to be accurate, and as impartial as nature will permit a philosopher to be when dealing with opinions more or less out of harmony with his own. But it may prevent misleading anticipations if I confess at the start that the tracing of historical affiliations and historical causes has had only a secondary interest for me, and that the book as a whole is frankly propaganda, and designed to recommend one particular attitude as against competing attitudes; apart from this critical interest, it is not very likely that the work would have been carried through. If it were urged that fewer pages of criticism, and more attention to historical and descriptive data, would have resulted in a more generally useful volume, I do not know that I should be prepared to combat the claim; though I think it might be argued that one way, and at times the only way, to give an intelligible account of a philosophical doctrine, especially of the more esoteric sort, is by pointing out its limitations and obscurities. My real excuse however for writing a book in which criticism plays so large a part is that I wanted to do so.

The particular philosophical standpoint which the following pages presuppose as a background, is one which, I am regretfully aware, many philosophers, perhaps most of them, will regard as lamentably crude and unadventurous. Typically two conceptions have been predominant in the history of thought—the psychological, and the logical. For the one, reality is to be interpreted as experience, beyond which the philosopher should not attempt to pry, “experience” stand-

ing for the actual stuff of human living, to the exclusion of any more ultimate or "metaphysical" source in the nature of things. For the other, the traditional demands of the dialectician are supreme, with the result that reality itself tends to turn into a system of logical relations such as will satisfy these demands. As against both these ideals of method, I have assumed constantly that the business of philosophy is to clarify and to bring into harmony, but also in the end to justify substantially, the fundamental beliefs that are implicated in our normal human interests; and that this reference to the needs of living, in a wide and generous interpretation, furnishes the touchstone by which alone the sanity of philosophical reasonings and conclusions can be tested. And put to such a test, both empiricism and rationalism, in their more technical sense, seem to me to stand condemned. While philosophy aims of course at logical consistency, thought, or logic, is an instrument, and not the constitutive stuff out of which the world is made; and even as an instrument its conclusions, in the hands of human thinkers, are too fallible and precarious to be safely substituted for the convictions by which human life and human values are sustained. Empiricism, on the other hand, in spite of its laudable insistence on translating metaphysical reality into homely concrete matter of fact, is clearly guilty of a paradox when it denies the right of anything to set up as a fact unless it be a part of some human experience-process. In assuming that *belief*, rather than experience, is the starting-point of our cognitive contact with the world,—or, if one prefers, that "experience" includes a reference to the natural setting within which life goes on, as well as to the immediate facts of experiencing,—I conceive that I am really more empirical than the empiricists. Of course I know that the assumption will not approve itself to all philosophers. But if, as seems unavoidable, any fundamental criticism in philosophy must start with the acceptance of an attitude or a

notion of what is reasonable and convincing, which is itself debatable, I do consider it an advantage when this attitude comes naturally to the human mind, and does not have to be induced by a special training in some school of metaphysics.

I ought perhaps also to say that philosophy here, in line with the purpose I have just set forth, is taken in a somewhat restricted sense, to the exclusion of certain matters which a history of philosophy might be expected to cover. For the most part I propose to deal only with those central and illuminating points of view which constitute a man's "philosophy" in the distinctive sense; and the special philosophical disciplines, accordingly, receive attention only as they have some pretty direct bearing upon this. There are, for example, technical developments in the realm of logic and scientific method, that many would rate as of large importance for the history of thought, of which no account in detail will be found in these pages. Even in the field of ethics, and of metaphysics itself, such technical problems as are separable from a comprehensive philosophic outlook are relatively neglected.

After some hesitation, it has seemed to me best also to make no attempt to cover recent developments in philosophy which so far are confined to the pages of the philosophical journals. This does not indicate my opinion of their value; the last few years have seen an unusual amount of acute and original thinking, some of which conceivably may bulk large in the immediate future.



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# ENGLISH AND AMERICAN PHILOSOPHY SINCE 1800

## CHAPTER I

### SCOTTISH REALISM

#### § 1. *Reid. Thomas Brown*

1. The close of the eighteenth century in England was one of those recurrent periods when speculative curiosity about the bases of human existence and human belief seems almost to have vanished from the mind. It is only in the field of political philosophy that genuine creative activity is visible; here indeed three names lend to the period real distinction. In William Godwin, a thin but acute intelligence, we find a sincere passion for liberty and equal justice that is still not unimpressive, though it is turned into the somewhat shallow channels of a rationalistic and individualistic logic which renders it an easy prey to the scornful. Quite at the opposite extreme from Godwin stands the powerful and florid personality of Burke, who was uttering noble truisms to prove that liberty is an overrated blessing, and that reforms are only justified when they involve no element of risk to men of property and breeding. Meanwhile Jeremy Bentham, engaged in trying to get an English ministry interested in the good work of reforming law and building model prisons, was already beginning to suspect that something besides ignorance and inattention lies back of that lack of passionate regard for the greatest good of

the greatest number which rulers sometimes display, and was laying the foundation for the hardheaded and non-Utopian radicalism about which cluster the most influential intellectual tendencies of the first half of the nineteenth century. But even Bentham, although there are to be found in him the roots of a comprehensive utilitarian philosophy that later becomes explicit in James Mill, has almost no interest in first principles except as they lend themselves directly to practical ends.

Two opposing tendencies of thought were in possession of the field at the opening of the new century. Both of these had their center of gravity in an empirical observation of the human mind, and both were marked by a plodding patience of analysis rather than by any inspired sense for the vitalities of the human spirit. In a little group of literary men, influenced partly by their own genius, and in part also by the new German romanticism, a more humanistic attitude toward things of the mind was already making its appearance; but it was not till later that this came to have any wide influence on prevalent ways of thought. For the present, the few who took an interest in philosophy at all found themselves divided chiefly on the question of whether mental processes are to be explained by the laws of association at work upon the material of sense, or whether there is need to call in besides certain ultimate and unexplainable truths of intuition. The first tendency, to which the Utilitarian movement was presently to attach itself, had its chief prophet in David Hartley; and its most vigorous exponent in the latter part of the century was the radical Unitarian minister Joseph Priestley. The other and opposing tendency goes back to the revolt of Thomas Reid against the sceptical idealism of Hume. It was this second school—of Scottish intuitionism—which occupied the most commanding position at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Professing as it did to stand as the champion of religion and morality against scepticism and materialism, it was naturally in better odor in academic circles, and for the time being it had an

advantage also in the comparative talents of its defenders. It will be convenient, therefore, to take the so-called Scottish school as the starting point for the present exposition. And this will prove unintelligible without going back to Reid himself, though Reid of course belongs wholly to the preceding century.

2. Since the vogue of German Idealism, it has been commonly assumed that all earlier forms of intuitionism have been superseded once for all by the work of Kant and his successors. That the Scotch philosophers were far less subtle in their metaphysics is obviously true; but this is not in every way a disadvantage. Kant approached his problem under the sway of highly elaborated and technical prepossessions, and he felt compelled to shape his answer with these always in view. He was in much the same case as the liberal theologian who sets out to free religion from its dogmatism, but who feels at liberty to do so only by a revaluation of the accepted formulations of the past. In both instances the task might have been easier, and better done, if it had been approached in a simpler and more direct way.

The exaltation of the part which underived and undebatable principles play in knowledge might easily lend itself, as later critics were fond of pointing out, to a readiness to accept as final whatever is familiar and congenial to the mind, and so to an illiberal conservatism in politics and religion. In calling itself the philosophy of Common Sense, the Scottish school did nothing to lessen this danger. Interpreted cautiously the phrase is not objectionable, even if it is not altogether felicitous. The intuitionists wanted to repudiate merely reasoned or speculative conclusions, in favor of those first principles, shown ultimate and general in analysis, which we are under the necessity of taking for granted in the business of life without being able to give for them a logical proof. Judgments of "common sense," in addition to the fact of their general acceptance and their importance for conduct, have also this char-

acter of sure immediacy. They go straight to the mark by a sort of quick intuitive decision, and in consequence may serve to supply a title for a philosophy which seeks to emphasize the fundamental and unreasoned foundations of belief. But if we grow a little careless, an appeal to common sense may well tend to encourage habits of mind that are scarcely to be approved. Instead of merely standing for the endeavor to sift out what are in fact the simple underlying assumptions of experience in general, it may mean a slovenly habit of shirking difficult analysis, and accepting on their own terms the dicta of average uncritical opinion, using the common man's dislike of any strenuous exercise of the intellect to discredit the more exacting claims of philosophy. And in some of the lesser lights of the Scottish school such a tendency is indeed plainly in evidence. Reid himself, however, is open to criticism in nothing like the same degree. Reid is far from interpreting common sense in terms of a general plebiscite. "To the candid and discerning Few," he remarks, "I appeal as the only competent judges. If they disapprove, I am probably in the wrong, and shall be ready to change my opinion upon conviction. If they approve, the Many will at last yield to their authority, as they always do." As a matter of fact Reid is putting his trust, not in the formulated opinions of mankind, but in those underlying assumptions "so necessary in the conduct of life that a man cannot live and act according to the rules of common prudence without them," though these assumptions may have to wait upon careful philosophic analysis to get recognition and expression. What at bottom he is maintaining is, that life is more fundamental than reason or logic; that our most inexpugnable beliefs grow directly out of the needs of life, and are not grounded upon argument, because arguments are grounded upon them; and that when the case is so, we are only discrediting philosophy by the pretense that it is not so, and that conviction is to be made to wait upon reasoned demonstration. *Belief*, in a word, is prior to reason-

ing, and supplies it with its necessary material; "I am persuaded that the unjust live by faith as well as the just." In carrying out his program, Reid it is true leaves much to be desired. Frequently his analysis stops a good deal short of the needs of the case; and he does not always distinguish as clearly as he might the practical postulates of experience, from the traditional philosophical machinery of self-evident and non-contingent "truths of reason." His meaning, however, is sound; and in his demand that our reasonings should presuppose and keep true to the practical assurances by which men live, he provides the only possible check against the aberrations of philosophy.

3. Reid's own work centers about one problem in particular—our knowledge of the external world. Originally an adherent of Berkeley's doctrine, the sceptical results to which this led in Hume had startled his common sense, and caused him to retrace his steps. The fundamental vice of the new "way of ideas" he thought himself to have discovered in its uncritical acceptance of a traditional philosophical opinion—that in knowledge there is need of some intermediary between the object and the perceiving mind. Locke's ideas, as Reid interprets them, are simply the remnants of the old and ungrounded theory of substantial images that pass into the mind, or the brain, from the things themselves. So far is it from being so, however, that we know directly nothing but ideas, that we do not know ideas at all, for the excellent reason that there are no such things. All that a true analysis reveals is the mental act,—the idea is not something on which this activity is performed, but, if it is anything at all, the activity itself,—and the real object. There is an original principle of the mind, to be accepted without explanation because it is already involved in all explanation, whereby there is attached to a sensation a belief in the present existence of the thing perceived, just as there is present in memory a belief in the past existence of the thing remembered. This belief is a simple act of the mind, which

cannot be further analyzed or defined; we can give no reason for believing, other than the fact that this is the way our minds work.

When one starts to scrutinize however Reid's position more in detail, it becomes apparent that it is not in every respect clearly conceived, and that it contains elements of unequal value. As against subjectivism, it is clearly in the right in maintaining that what anyone really believes himself to know is, not his own idea, but an independent object—in perception, the reality of an external world. Reid is successful in showing not only that this is the correct analysis of our actual conviction, but that if we take a different starting point, and hold that to begin with we only know the mental, we shall end up also by knowing only the mental, and so land in practical scepticism. It seems clear that if nature—or, as Reid himself would put it, if God—had not taken things into its own hands, and provided us with a belief in the existence of the physical world more primitive than an uncertain inference from mental data, our chance of ever attaining it would have been precarious. When, however, we ask for a more exact account of the nature of the situation, difficulties and obscurities begin to creep in. One can perhaps best start from the point which is clearest, calling attention to complications as they arise.

4. Now in connection with the so-called secondary qualities of matter, Reid's meaning is plain enough. It starts by emphasizing the sharp distinction between sensation, and objective quality. A sensation, say the smell of a rose, can be known to exist on occasion when an object acts upon the sense organ. But this sensation is not the thing we know in perception. What we perceive is "some power, quality or virtue in the rose"; the sensation is merely a sign which nature has constituted with the capacity for calling up or suggesting the rose which produces the sensation. Furthermore for one who, like Reid, accepts unquestioningly the science of his day, it is just as certain that the sensation of smell is not *like* any quality in



the object, as that it *is* not the quality in the object. It is this fact on which the so-called "representative" theory of knowledge suffers shipwreck, since, if the sensation is not like the quality, it cannot represent it. In the case of secondary attributes, accordingly, the nature of "perception" is easily defined; the perception of an odor is the sensation of smell, plus the intuitive and unreasoned belief that an external cause exists which is producing it.

The primary qualities, however, introduce a complication; for the difference between primary qualities and secondary, according to Reid, is just this, that the former involve the recognition, not merely of a cause,—in itself unknown,—but of a specific character attaching to this cause and constituting its nature. It is the distinction between an obscure and occult quality, and one of which we have a clear and distinct conception. And the question thereupon arises, whence comes this new and positive knowledge of objective qualities. Here also Reid's answer is plain up to a point; the quality is "suggested" to the mind, and a belief in it induced, by the appropriate sensation. This is to be sure suggestion of a rather special sort. Ordinarily when one thing suggests another, the two have both been in experience together before; in perception the fact is, rather, that a power acts by nature to bring about directly the appearance of *new* notions, conjure them up "by a natural kind of magic." Thus touch sensations suggest the new qualities of extension, solidity, and motion. In the case of visible figure, sensation is even dispensed with altogether, and the quality is suggested by the material impression on the nervous system merely. But now the important thing to notice is, that in any case, between the new quality and the sensation there is always a total difference. A pin has length, thickness, figure and weight; a sensation can have none of these characters. Accordingly it follows once more that to perceive anything, it is not necessary that we have some impression, sensation, or idea in our mind which is like it. There is no double object—one

sun in the heavens and one in the mind. The sun we see is the real sun; we are so constituted by nature that the sensations we receive are the means of calling up immediately real qualities which, as we can make quite sure by bringing them into comparison, are no more like sensations than the toothache is like a triangle. I feel an object as hard. What happens is, that I have a feeling of touch which enables me to conclude, without any reasoning or comparing of ideas, that an external reality exists whose parts stick so closely together that they cannot be displaced without considerable force; and this latter character obviously has nothing in common with the touch sensation which suggests it.

5. But now such a statement of the situation gives rise to more questions than seem to have occurred to Reid. Reid is so impressed by the difference between sensations like touch or smell, and the qualities recognized by science as belonging to matter, that he takes it for granted that nothing more is needed in order to establish the exclusively non-mental character of the latter; he fails to ask himself in what form then they do exist in so far as they are within the precincts of the knowing mind. The very use of the word "suggestion" implies that we are operating after all with something in the nature of "ideas"; and the fact, if it be a fact, that a sensation has the power to call up a qualitatively new idea which is different from itself, need not of necessity prevent this from being a new *idea*, rather than a purely non-mental existence. All that Reid shows is, that it is not like certain other specified mental facts; he offers no proof that it may not equally in some sense be a part of our mental furniture. It would seem that what Reid vaguely had in mind could be translated into terms of *relations*. Scientific knowledge is primarily relational in its content, and Reid's description of primary qualities reduces in point of fact to relational terms; accordingly if we understand him as meaning that, through sense experience, we are led to recognize also relationships not themselves reducible to sensa-

tional quality, we shall be able to satisfy most of the requirements of his language. But even thus there would remain the same point to be settled: what is the mental status of these relations, since apparently they are, in knowledge, *somehow* present "in the mind" even though they belong also to the world which knowledge apprehends?

In the absence of any explicit dealing with this question it is not easy to determine just what Reid's "realism" amounts to. At times his insistence that we know the object immediately seems to imply, as later on Hamilton tried to interpret it, that the object is literally present in perception in its own person, with nothing mental of any sort to mediate it. On the other hand, "natural suggestion" seems rather to point to the supposal that the immediacy of the object is only the immediate *conviction* of its actual existence, plus the presence of what must after all be called an "idea" of its qualities. Perhaps the best reason for supposing that Reid might, had he envisaged the problem more sharply, have found himself committed to the first of these interpretations, is supplied by his further theory of the nature of *conception*. At first sight, indeed, when we turn to the knowledge of objects not at the moment open to perception, but absent in time or space, it seems less easy to dispense with an idea to mediate the knowledge; nor is there the same reason here for repudiating a "resemblance" between the idea and the original perception. The denial of anything that can be called an idea in connection with thought, memory, or imagination is, however, a point on which Reid is explicit. It is true this denial loses something of its significance when we remember that Reid understands Locke and his followers to mean, that the image is a quasi-material efflux or emanation from the object, which equally with the object itself is separate from the mind, and whose only advantage rests on the fact that it does not lie at a distance, but has got close up to or inside the brain. Had his attention not thus been directed to a misconception, he might not have found

the belief in ideas so absurd. The fact remains however that he does persist in supposing that he has got rid of ideas in *any* sense, even as modifications of the mind itself. And in construing the situation without them, he shows a good deal of acuteness. The thought or idea of an object is to be interpreted, he maintains, not as a duplication of the object, from which the object is then inferred, but as an *act* of the mind which issues directly on the object itself. Even in imagining an unreal object, there still is no question of an idea; in thinking of a centaur, it is actually a centaur of which we think, and not the idea or image of one.<sup>1</sup> And in some interpretation it would be difficult not to agree that this does indeed represent the fact. But because we are not thinking *about* the idea, it need not follow that no idea is there. And how an unreal object can *be* at all when it has no existence outside the mind, and there is no idea in any sense within the mind, Reid makes no effort to explain.

6. But now if knowledge is, in thought and memory, sufficiently accounted for as a mental operation directed upon the object itself, it might be asked whether, in perception also, sensations do not occupy a somewhat anomalous place, as mental states intervening as "signs" between the mind's activity and the thing. And as a matter of fact two tendencies show themselves here in Reid's discussions. When he is engaged in the actual introspective analysis of perception, he recognizes unequivocally the mental existence of qualitative sense data. But a disposition is apparent also to pare the fact away, until some doubt remains as to just what after all is left.<sup>2</sup> In the first place, sensation is used continually as synonymous with *feeling*; and at times the border line between secondary qualities, and the quality of agreeableness or painfulness, seems practically to disappear. And now further, we are told, feeling is a "mental operation" again; at least it is so close to it that

<sup>1</sup> *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man*, Essay IV, Chap. II.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Essay I, Chap. I, 12.

it is not worth while stopping to pick our terms. Reid has of course something to go on here; when we "feel a feeling," there is no object distinguished from the act in the sense in which a thing which we perceive is distinct from the perceiving. But if it be true that what is felt is inseparable from the act of feeling, this is itself a reason why the "operation" called feeling should be put on a different basis from the operation called knowing. An act which is identified with a definite bit of qualitative being, whether it be the quality of touch or odor, or only of pleasantness and pain, can continue to be called an "act" only after careful discrimination. To "feel a feeling" means indeed, merely, "to have a feeling," or "a feeling is there"; and this is just the mental existent, or Lockian idea, which Reid professes himself unable to discover.

There is one sensation in particular where the ambiguities which attend Reid's doctrine are especially conspicuous—that of color. He has, in the first place, in order to maintain the thesis that there is no identity of character between sensations and objective qualities, to remove extensity from color sensation, since extensity is for him objective. And even in the case of bare color he has a difficulty to meet. It seems clear that the naïve mind locates color as such—what Reid calls the "appearance of color"—actually in the object. But Reid cannot easily admit this. Since for him, with his scientific prepossessions, color is objective only as smell is objective,—as an unknown power capable of producing sensations in us,—and since to allow that nature creates a mistaken belief that apparent color is in the object would be to throw doubt upon an instinctive principle of common sense, he is forced to hold that we do *not* naturally tend to objectify color-quality; one gathers from Reid that men generally quite overlook the peculiar quality of color, as they do the sensational quality of touch, in their interest in those further objective properties of which it is a sign. To fortify this judgment Reid makes use of both of his expedients, and color is translated now into the

"act of a percipient," and now into hedonic feeling. "It is not easy to persuade the vulgar that, in seeing a coloured body, when the light is not too strong nor the eye inflamed, they have any sensation or feeling at all"—this has not the least plausibility except as we reduce color-sensation to the mere feeling of painfulness.<sup>1</sup>

7. The most eminent of Reid's early disciples is Dugald Stewart, who occupied for a quarter of a century the chair of Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh to which he was elected in 1785, and who won through the medium of his teaching a commanding position among the intellectual lights of his day. Stewart had all the gifts that go to make up a successful college professor. With an attractive presence and a facile flow of language, he combined a suave and unaggressive personality, and a readiness to hold in abeyance whatever in his opinions was likely to give offence in powerful quarters, which enabled him to perform his duties with universal applause. His main influence however is in the way of popularizing philosophy rather than advancing it. This was his own professed interest in his academic work—to teach philosophy as a liberal and elegant discipline bearing on the "work and adornment of human life"; and his published lectures in consequence show only occasional lapses into rigorous metaphysical argument. For the most part he follows closely in Reid's footsteps, though with a number of minor changes, many of them improvements. Thus the conception of the "principles of common sense" is rendered rather more precise by Stewart; he prefers to call them Fundamental Laws of Human Belief, or Constituent Elements of Human Reason. He thinks of them definitely, that is, not as "objects of knowledge," but as assumptions "necessarily and unconsciously involved in" the exercise of our faculties; not as principles or truths from which knowledge can be derived by way of deduction, but as the "necessary *conditions* on which every step of the deduction tacitly proceeds."

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Essay II, Chap. XVIII.

Stewart makes one modification of Reid's doctrine of perception, by drawing a distinction between the mere momentary existence of an objective quality while we are perceiving it, and its continued existence independent of our perception. It is only the first that is sufficiently accounted for by intuition; "independent" existence is the result of experience, due to the discovery that we cannot, as in the case of imagination, dismiss or recall the object as we please.

8. It is to two younger contemporaries of Stewart that the significant developments of Reid's philosophy are due—Thomas Brown and Sir William Hamilton. Brown was a precocious young philosopher who already at the age of twenty had published a respectable criticism of Darwin's *Zoonomia*. Called upon to substitute for Dugald Stewart when the latter's health failed him, he filled this rather exacting position with remarkable success, and in 1810 received the appointment to a professorship. Brown was perhaps handicapped by his own facility, especially when taken in connection with the fact that he had no first-rate contemporaries to set the pace for him; he seems very quickly to have felt that the last word had been said, and to have been indeed more solicitous of his reputation as a minor poet than as a philosopher. When published shortly after his death his Lectures attained a striking literary success, which proved as short-lived however as it was unusual.

In its most general form, Brown's correction of Reid lay in the protest against a too liberal allowance of principles or faculties. Unquestionably Reid had been far too little critical in this respect; almost any fairly ultimate fact of human nature was permitted to become a candidate for his list. Thus there is a faculty that leads us to speak the truth, to confide in the veracity of others, to interpret facial expression, to accept constituted authority; and there is of course to each distinguishable psychological operation the allowance of a separate faculty—perception, imagination, conception, memory, and the like. Interpreted sympathetically there is an important element of

truth in Reid's contention which the associationists missed; he recognized, as they did not, the presence of that instinctive element in human nature which modern biology has placed on a firm footing. But he failed to separate instinct clearly in its distinctive character from the intellectual perception of "truths"; and instead of an organization of the field of instinct, which would have needed in any case a far more adequate understanding of its biological basis than was possible at the time, he left only a collection of heterogeneous facts. Brown however is in even less of a position than Reid to supply this lack; and in the process of removing the excrescences of the Scottish tradition, association encroaches so far upon intuition that it becomes doubtful whether Brown might not rather be classed as a member of the opposing school.

Of the few intuitions which he still leaves standing, the most important is that of causation; though even here the situation is simplified. Reid, and after him Stewart, had held consistently enough that for scientific procedure causation means no more than invariable succession; the scientist is engaged solely in formulating the laws of phenomena, though intuition enters as an instinctive belief in uniformity. But Reid also thought that there was another and metaphysical meaning to causality. The laws of nature are the rules of nature according to which the effects are produced; but there must also be a cause which operates according to these rules, an agent behind the scenes. This is a meaning important for philosophy even though it is not of any use in science; and it calls for a further original principle in the form of a self-evident intuition that every effect in nature must have an efficient cause with power to produce it. Brown does away altogether with causality in this second sense; the notion of power, if it has any meaning at all, is no more than a recognition of the similarity of the future to the past. Even the creative activity of God, which reason informs us is unavoidably required to explain the natural universe, is reducible to the need for be-



lieving that certain occurrences in God's mind are the invariable antecedents of natural phenomena; there is no third circumstance binding as it were the will of the Creator to the things which are to be. While however Brown agrees with Hume in reducing causation to uniformity, he rejects the supposition that the mere experiences of succession are enough to account for it. Rather, the belief in uniformity is inexplicable unless we suppose it brought to experience in the first place; "a stone has fallen a thousand times" differs as much from "will always fall," as does "a stone has fallen once." The invariableness is assumed, not inferred from preceding phenomena; unless we were so built as instinctively to expect the future to be similar to the past, the belief would never be generated in us by the mere observation of any number of successive events.

A corresponding simplification shows in the treatment of Reid's theory of perception. Here Brown repudiates outright, to begin with, Reid's attack upon ideas or images, and calls attention to the way in which this is misdirected through taking too seriously what is meant only as a metaphor. An idea is, Brown maintains, not the emanation from an object imported into the brain, but a modification of the mind itself, a particular form of the mind's existence. Now it seems self-evident to Brown that neither Reid, nor any other self-respecting philosopher, could really mean that an object is present bodily in the mind. Nothing can be *in* the mind but a modification of the mind's own nature; and therefore such a mental modification is always the medium through which a knowledge of objects is effected. Accordingly a part of Reid's doctrine of perception disappears. Certain sensations are, so Stewart following Reid had said, accompanied with an irresistible belief in the existence of certain qualities of external objects. Brown drops the reference to "qualities," leaving as the testimony of our instinctive constitution merely the belief in an external *something* that produces the sensation; to be the object of perception is nothing more than to be the foreign cause or oc-

casation on which this state of mind directly or indirectly arises. The situation which Reid had ascribed to secondary qualities is thus extended to all; even what we regard as extended or resisting is known to us only by the feelings occasioned in our minds. And in this way our perception of matter can be explained without calling in any special "faculty"; it involves only a complex association of ideas, including in particular the muscular feeling of resistance,—one of Brown's chief titles to fame is his distinction of muscular feelings from those of touch,—which serve to suggest to the mind the notion of a cause not in the mind itself. Without this last addition, we should have passed from Scottish realism to associationism; and even with it we evidently have taken only a short step in the direction of Reid's desire to validate objective knowledge. The actual qualitative knowledge we can hope to get is only of the successive states or affections of the mind; apart from this we are left at best with "a something we know not what," as a permanent source of sensation. And even this seems jeopardized on a closer scrutiny. Not only does Brown insist that the sensations which mediate knowledge are subjective, and wholly unlike anything that is in the object itself; the same is, if anything, even more clearly true of relations, which are feelings that arise in the mind, not from an external source, but from its own independent constitution. It follows that time, then, which is one of the relations, has no objective reality.<sup>1</sup> But in that case the notion of cause as well, which involves temporal succession, is purely mental; and it is natural to ask how any use of it can serve our purpose.

§ 2. *Hamilton. Mansel. The Edinburgh Reviewers*

1. On the whole, the most important name connected with the movement started by Reid is that of Sir William Hamilton, Professor of Logic and Metaphysics at Edinburgh from 1836

<sup>1</sup> *Philosophy of the Human Mind*, Lectures V, XLI.

till his death in 1856. Hamilton won an enormous reputation on a comparatively slender basis of published writing,—in particular, a number of articles contributed to the *Edinburgh Review*,—partly through the influence which his vigorous personality, aided by a portentous array of philosophical learning, made upon the academic world, but also through a real gift for abstract metaphysical speculation at a time when metaphysics in Great Britain seemed on the point of becoming extinct. Whether his talents were really of great service to the permanent cause of philosophy is another question. About his learning there is no dispute, though it was of a sort held in more esteem in his own day than at the present time. Hamilton is most successful in combing philosophical literature for semi-linguistic data; and all philosophy tends for him to take the measure of the little group of problems and concepts agitated by the Scottish school. The actual influence of his arduous historical labor, in the absence of any adequate embodiment, rests mainly on the fact that he had read widely in the new German philosophy, though he never quite got the clue to it; and his reputation did something to make such knowledge respectable. On the side of his own more original speculations, it is again very doubtful whether he has contributed anything of lasting value to the history of thought; and there is even some reason to suspect that, all things considered, his influence tended to encourage a sort of philosophizing that does the name of metaphysics no particular good. Hamilton's mind combines great subtlety with a defective sense for reality, and a lack even of first-rate logical clearheadedness; meanwhile he has built his philosophy about two terms—relativity, and consciousness—both of more than average ambiguity, and both certain to breed trouble unless one is prepared to exercise the most careful discrimination.

2. The phrase "relativity of knowledge" is one which the instructed reader will approach with a sinking of the heart, for he knows that in it lie all sorts of possibilities for obscure and

unprofitable logomachy. In its multiplicity of meanings Hamilton himself seems to revel; and this makes it difficult to state his position without a certain amount of indirection. The doctrine that knowledge is relative goes back to Reid and his successors, where it has on the whole a pretty definite meaning; and with this meaning Hamilton also takes his start. It intends to assert, namely, that we can know only the qualities or modifications or modes of substance, and not substance itself. This, so long as we hold to the traditional notion of substance, is indeed self-evident. If substance is that in which qualities inhere, it is not itself a quality; and since anything that is held as a specific character before the mind is found to be a quality or a relation, substance as distinct from quality cannot be thought in terms of definite characteristics. It is merely the unknown answer to a logical demand.

3. But now a second meaning also appears in the earlier philosophers, though it comes into prominence only in Hamilton's hands. This is to the effect that in becoming known through its qualities, an object is always relative to our human faculties. However, this is open to more than one interpretation. The statement may have, and at times evidently does have, a purely verbal significance, from which no consequences flow that have the slightest philosophical importance. It tells us, in other words, that we cannot know anything unless we have the power to know it, and that there may be plenty of things in the world which we do not know through lack of the appropriate organ, as we should never suspect the existence of color were we born without eyes. But about the validity of the knowledge we do happen to possess this does not decide one way or the other; and it is the question of validity which interests the philosopher.

There is however one particular fact in this connection which may be thought to bear upon the question of validity, and to lend itself to that apparent desire to discredit knowledge which the claim that knowledge is only relative seems to reveal. This

is the fact that there cooperate in sense perception two things, the object and the sense organ, with in some cases also a third thing, the intervening medium, to complicate the process. It is a natural conclusion to draw from this, that since the activity of the object is modified both by the fact that it has to act through a transmitting medium, and by the peculiarities of the organic structure, the result cannot be equivalent to the originating cause; if object and organism have to combine in producing perception, perception cannot truly represent the object alone.

It is not easy to decide in Hamilton's case just how seriously we ought to take this conclusion. Of course the *physical* effect of the interaction of two things is not identical with either of them by itself; but we are not supposed to be dealing here with physiology. On the other hand it is a plain fact that eccentricities of the organism sometimes interfere to falsify the evidence we seem to get from the senses, as is shown by the way in which we are constantly discovering how to make allowance for organic conditions. But this, so far from meaning that knowledge is essentially and necessarily imperfect, implies the contrary; we can know that a given piece of knowledge is inadequate only through the possession of adequate knowledge by which to correct it. A metaphysical doctrine of relativity, however, evidently intends to refer to knowledge intrinsically and always. We need then a plain answer to the question, Does the cooperation of the senses, or the mind, in knowledge, bring it about that the character attributed to reality always is different from the character it actually possesses? or may we know characters as they really are? The plain answer in Hamilton's case is not forthcoming. On the one hand the importance assigned to the doctrine that knowledge is dependent on the cooperation of different factors, strongly suggests that we intend the former implication; otherwise, again, relativity stands only for the truism that we cannot know unless we have the proper means of knowledge. However we are not com-

pelled to attribute this to Hamilton. Logically his thesis that the full object presented to the mind is something compounded of the external object, the external medium, and the living organ of sense in their mutual relation,<sup>1</sup> may mean, not that each single element in knowledge is due to the combination of causes, but that there are *different* elements some of which are due to one factor and some to another; in which case it is our business to distinguish them, and assign them each to its proper source. If such is the meaning, any thoroughgoing doctrine of relativity as a doctrine of necessary falsification breaks down; in the end, though not immediately, we can know qualities that belong to reality itself, since a critical analysis can eliminate the subjective elements, and leave the objective in their purity. This is the way in which Hamilton himself apparently intended to have us understand him; and indeed it would seem that it *must* be his interpretation when we turn to another cardinal point in his philosophy. For it is the whole contention of his perceptual realism, in opposition to Brown, that in perception we have immediate knowledge of external reality itself, supposedly in its true nature.

So far, then, we cannot be certain that we have got beyond the doctrine that we know only the qualities of things and not their underlying substance; for no decisive reason has been given why we should not know these qualities as they really are. And as Hamilton's realism implies that we do know them as they are in certain cases, his realism and his relativity—if relativity is to be supposed to cast some discredit on our knowledge—are not in entire harmony. But now there are two further refinements in the meaning of relativity which carry us nearer to Hamilton's real interests, and which divide the responsibility between them for what may seem on the surface at least its inconsistent demands; the first becomes a tool for upholding the reality of our knowledge of the world of sense perception, and the second justifies that conviction of the

<sup>1</sup> *Metaphysics*, Vol. I, pp. 146 f. (Edin. and Lond., 1859).

"imbecility" of the human mind which relativity certainly is intended to suggest.

4. The doctrine that sense qualities are the outcome of an interaction between two causal agents tended, as we saw, to throw doubt on their claim to reach reality. But now there is a variant conception here. When the claim that in perception we know matter directly is uppermost, relativity gets a further meaning. It stands, that is, as a description of the *internal* content of the perceiving experience itself, and no longer as a statement of the relationship between the human faculties and a cause beyond experience. In perception, namely, Hamilton thinks that matter is always recognized as distinguished from the self that perceives it, and that both alike—self and not-self—are present, as related, directly to consciousness, or within consciousness.<sup>1</sup> And in this way relativity is made, not to throw doubt upon, but to validate, the claim to real knowledge. To say, with the idealists or the sceptics, that we perceive only modifications of our own minds, is a falsification of the fact. Perception is always of something distinguished, in the very act of perceiving, from any possible modification of the self; and accordingly if we trust consciousness we have the right to claim an immediate, though a relative, knowledge of the external world, possessing the same certainty that everyone recognizes as attaching to the testimony of consciousness to the subjective element.

5. The doctrine of perceptual realism which here enters on the scene is exceedingly difficult to state satisfactorily. It may perhaps best be approached by contrasting it with Reid's realism. The strong point in Reid's contention is his unqualified adherence to the common-sense judgment that somehow our knowledge fastens on the thing itself, and not on a mere subjective copy of it; in perception, and in thought generally, we are aware of only one object, and that the real one. But this so far is a fact simply, which does not supply its own

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, I, p. 288; *Discussions*, pp. 56 f., 60 (N. Y., 1858).

interpretation; and it might not be inconsistent with a mediatist view of knowledge if this were qualified with sufficient care. Even if objects are known only through the medium of sensations or ideas, there still might be a way to conceive of this without having to deny that the original knowledge-reference is directed to the object, and not to the mental medium. Hamilton however is not so much concerned with the common-sense conviction, as with a certain metaphysical interpretation which he gives to it—the interpretation that, to be known realistically, the object must be actually present within consciousness, and identified as an existent with the experienced quality. This metaphysical notion of immediacy Hamilton makes the essence of Reid's doctrine, and he sets out to justify it against Brown, who, he rightly saw, had given up realism in this peculiar sense.

But in doing this he develops consequences which, if Reid's intention was to justify common-sense belief, have surprisingly little in common with the spirit of his master. In the first place, he is led to falsify entirely the testimony of experience when he comes to knowledge in the form of thought and memory, and to adopt the very position which the Scottish philosophy supposed itself to have refuted. Reid had said, with quite obvious truth, that when I remember an object previously seen, I remember the object itself, and not a present image of it; and this claim is not affected by any doubt that may attach to his further denial of the existence of an image altogether. Hamilton sees that there is such a thing psychologically as an image, which alone is immediately present. But because of his dogma that knowledge can be immediate only in case its object is literally there and in contact with the knower, he is forced to hold that we cannot in memory know the past object, since this is no longer present; what I know is my present memory-image, and I infer the real object from this. In memory, the position of Reid has thus been abandoned completely, and a return made to the representative theory.



It is only in sense perception, accordingly, that the possibility of immediate knowledge remains. But even here Hamilton is compelled, in the interests of his metaphysical thesis, to depart from everyday belief almost as widely as idealism had done. Since the object, to be known immediately, has to be identically present, any removal of the object in space or time is sufficient to prevent such knowledge. One difficulty here which would appeal to the modern psychologist—the difficulty that perception occurs an appreciable time interval after the stimulus affects the sense organ—Hamilton gets round by denying the fact; the difficulty in terms of space he meets by recasting our naïve belief. Reid had said, I do not see a sensation of the sun, but the real sun. No, says Hamilton, this is ridiculous—that is, logically inconsistent with my definition of immediacy—since the real sun is separated from us by millions of miles; what I really see is the light rays in contact with the retina. But Hamilton is not able even to stop here; and in the Notes on Reid, which represent his final belief, it appears that it is after all not the light rays that we know directly, but, instead, certain qualities of the organism itself. To justify the light ray theory, Hamilton had been forced to extend the mind beyond the brain to the surfaces of the body, in order to make it possible for external things to get in contact with it. But even contact is not sufficient, since the colliding object still lies beyond the mind; to overcome the separation we have to get reality actually inside the body. Accordingly it becomes necessary to make a distinction. Since the external reality itself still remains outside, and so beyond consciousness, we are compelled to separate in our explanation extra-bodily existence, and intra-organic quality. For the first of these, Hamilton now resorts to what is essentially Brown's doctrine; the existence of external things is not strictly an immediate fact of consciousness, but is due to an experience of resisted movement through which we acquire the belief in an independent counterforce—a belief that may conceivably be mistaken, even though

we find it practically impossible to doubt it. All that is left standing of immediate realism is, accordingly, the presence within consciousness of certain real physical qualities which are known immediately as qualities of the organism itself, but which, since the organism is of a piece with the rest of the world, we are justified in using to interpret also the nature of that outside force revealed by the feeling of resistance. To establish this first possibility it only remains to break down the hard and fast separation between matter and sensitivity, so that a sensation can at the same time be held to be an affection of the physical organism itself; sensations, that is, are to be regarded as belonging neither to the body alone, nor to the mind alone, but to the composite of which each is a constituent. Here Hamilton leaves much to be desired in the way of clearness; but his view seems to be that the real or primary qualities of matter actually get inside consciousness in the shape of relationships of "outness" immediately observable among secondary sensational qualities, and recognized as a not-self over against the self.<sup>1</sup>

6. It is sufficiently apparent how far in such a doctrine we have gone from Reid's demand that we accept the practical truth of our common-sense beliefs, as against unwarranted theoretical constructions. And it is not clear even that we have saved the dogma in the interest of which the theory is devised. This dogma is, that a knowledge of the external world is guaranteed by Consciousness, and that Consciousness is never by any possibility open to doubt. Now this introduction of consciousness contributes very sensibly to the obscurities of Hamilton's position, though it also serves to call attention to their source. By consciousness, Reid had been accustomed to mean the power, or faculty, through which we become aware of the operations of the mind; it corresponds substantially to the power of "introspection," conceived however as an immediate rather than a reflective act. Brown had abandoned this along

<sup>1</sup> Reid, Note D.\*

with other faculties, and had used the term of the series of feelings themselves, the stream of "conscious states." In a general way Hamilton goes back to Reid's conception, in that consciousness stands for an immediate and indubitable knowledge of the present content of our minds. But he objects to Reid's limitation of consciousness to a special faculty of *self* knowledge, while turning over our acquaintance with matter to something called Perception; if we know the ego and the non-ego through separate faculties, of what sort, he asks, is the act that distinguishes and relates the two? And he meets the difficulty by his own theory that "consciousness" reveals not the self alone, but always self and not-self in relation. Hamilton's motive here is clear enough; he wants to say that we are conscious of the object, because only immediate presence to consciousness supplies indubitable "knowledge," in distinction from possibly mistaken "belief." But in spite of all his efforts his theory fails after all to give him this; and his discussion turns into an effort to camouflage the fact without qualifying his original claims. As the analysis of sense perception has compelled him to admit, no belief in objects outside the organism possesses strict necessity, though such objects are essential to what we mean by an external world; what then does the authority of "consciousness" amount to in such a case? Not, he confesses, to the authorization of a belief in matter, but to the recognition that matter is what men actually do believe in; all that consciousness testifies to is the nature of our belief, self-evident as a matter of introspective analysis, but furnishing no criterion of the belief's validity. For the last we have to fall back, as Reid and Brown had done, merely on the impossibility of giving up the belief without practical bankruptcy, since if consciousness is proved false in one point, its whole authority is undermined.<sup>1</sup> But in this case belief is sufficient, and the peculiar virtue supposed to reside in Hamilton's theory of consciousness disappears.

<sup>1</sup> Reid, Note A, II, IV; *Metaphysics*, I, pp. 271 ff.

Meanwhile it should be noticed that the whole doctrine of the relativity of knowledge in the sense we are now considering rests on a very doubtful basis. It has been assumed as something which nobody can seriously question, that we are conscious, in every act of knowledge, of self and not-self as two related factors, and that it is impossible for us to know without at the same time knowing *that* we know. As a matter of fact we are conscious of nothing of the sort. When I look at an object, there is no need whatever that the content of knowledge should at the same time include a reference to myself; unless I am in a sophisticated mood, the probability is that it will not include this. Hamilton is using here the evidence, not of perception, but of a later reflective judgment. Naturally when I think about my *perception of* an object, subject and object are present in my thought; I cannot think of a thing *as* known without a reference to the correlative term "knower." But there is no reason why I should not think of things without thinking of them as known.

7. We may, then, in estimating the fifth and last sense of relativity, turn from Hamilton's confused doctrine of consciousness, to the plain meaning which he shares with Reid. Here the authority of consciousness means only the authority of common sense, or of those fundamental beliefs which depend upon nature or instinct rather than upon reason or speculative theory. And it is in the light of this that we may understand that notion of relativity on which Hamilton's agnosticism chiefly rests. For this agnosticism is not as bad as it sounds. It is primarily concerned not with perception, nor with the validity of primitive beliefs, but with *reason*; and the relativity of knowledge is designed to vindicate perception and common sense in opposition to the misleading deliverances of the speculative faculty. It is not, then, that Hamilton distrusts in a thoroughgoing way the soundness of the human mind. What he distrusts is only a one-sided reliance on logic and ratiocination. And it is to this that he opposes his grand principle—

"the facts of consciousness, the whole facts, and nothing but the facts." Here the second phrase stands for the need of taking into account the moral and religious side of human nature as well as the intellect; the third stands for the need of keeping close to the primitive and intuitive deliverances of the mind,—incomprehensible indeed, but only in the sense that, as they are the basis of all explanation, there is nothing more ultimate in terms of which to explain them,—and of defending these against presumptuous efforts to put in their place man-made theories and hypotheses.

But Hamilton, as usual, goes beyond the common-sense attitude of his predecessors, and complicates the matter by metaphysical subtleties. And in particular he turns to a sort of consideration which always has a peculiar fascination for the true metaphysician. The main proof of the "imbecility" of the speculative mind Hamilton finds in the antinomies of reason—in the fact, namely, that when we leave the realm of homely matters of experience, and aim at a knowledge of the Infinite and the Absolute, we find ourselves driven by an equal necessity of reason to contradictory conclusions. And what we are to deduce from this is, that the Creator did not intend the mind to roam in these exalted spheres. This does not mean, once more, an entire distrust of human powers. The very argument which proves the incompetence of the reason depends for its force on our confidence in the veracity of the mind's ultimate and unreasoned intuitions. I find myself, for example, unable to conceive space as infinitely extended; and on the other hand it is equally impossible for me to conceive it as finite and limited, with no other space beyond. But now by a law of thought I am forced to believe that one of the contradictory alternatives is true, even though I am utterly at a loss to conceive *how* it can be true. All that we can conceive—and this is the final account of relativity—is a mean between two contradictory extremes, both of which are inconceivable, but of which, as mutually repugnant, both cannot be false. "A

learned ignorance is thus the end of philosophy, as it is the beginning of theology." And here there comes to light the animus that lies back of Hamilton's agnosticism. He would destroy reason that he may leave room for faith, would dethrone the claims of a "presumptuous knowledge" in order that the rest of man's nature may get its rights.

In this final doctrine of Hamilton's we complete the circle, and get into connection again with the first sense of relativity. For the Unconditioned which the human mind is incompetent to know is the bare concept of substance apart from its qualities. And so considered, it is a good deal a matter of choice whether we shall regard Hamilton's agnosticism as immaterial, or as self-defeating. If we suppose, as on the whole the doctrine of perception supposes, that our definite perceptual knowledge is a knowledge of characters that really belong to the world, it is knowledge that seemingly ought to be good enough for anybody. If on the other hand, as in his metaphysical moods Hamilton constantly implies, such relative knowledge is illusory and unreal, if the mere fact that what we know is something in particular debars it from being knowledge, and true reality is the entire absence of distinctions,<sup>1</sup> it would seem that the very effort to think is suicidal, and every system alike goes down in the general crash. Hamilton's philosophy would then be only an attempt to deduce the theoretical consequences of a certain particular and quite arbitrary *definition* of the Absolute, as a unity apart from all multiplicity and all specific inner character in terms of interrelated content; in which case it need be no great cause for surprise if the attempt ends in self-contradiction. Hamilton's practical intention however is much more modest and plausible; what really moves him is the conviction that we are not forced of necessity to abandon beliefs because we cannot fully understand them and set forth their "why" and "how." But he weakens his case by the peculiar limitation which he gives to "faith." Reid also in a

<sup>1</sup> *Discussions*, pp. 26, 39 f.

sense falls back upon faith; but the principles of common sense which must be accepted in the end on trust are not prevented thereby from being essentially intelligible, even though they cannot be deduced from anything more ultimate. Hamilton, on the contrary, tends to regard as the proper object of faith that which in its nature is inconceivable. But faith in something which, if accepted, makes the world rational, is one thing; faith in what we are incapable of bringing before the mind in terms of thought is quite another. To assert, for example, that we believe in the personality of God, while at the same time we take the ground that this must be something totally different from what human beings understand by personality, is merely to utter sounds without sense.

8. It is in connection with Hamilton's justification of religious faith that we find the chief ground for the charge made by the rival school of the Utilitarians against the intuitionists generally, that with them philosophy is used to countenance the irrational, and serve as a bulwark against reform in Church and State. The possibility exists; and if reactionaries were much given to philosophy we might expect to find them sympathetic with intuitionist doctrines. It does not seem to be the case however that any serious charge of obscurantism can be brought against the more eminent representatives of common sense. Dugald Stewart was indeed a liberal of a fairly engaging sort, who in his class room disseminated ideas of sweetness and light which had no inconsiderable effect on the new generation; though it is also true that he took care to keep to terms too general to excite much chance of odium, and could recommend himself to a noble correspondent on the ground that, while he had at one time expressed himself warmly about the slave trade—the only question touching political issues on which he had ever presumed to influence his pupils—he had at once withdrawn these expressions when the question came to be a matter of general discussion. To be sure, all the common-sense philosophers were friends of religion, and

argued in its favor; but this by itself is hardly to be held against them. It is only in one disciple of Hamilton—Dean Mansel—that we come across a development which seems to offer some justification for the dislike and suspicion of the radicals.

What Mansel sets out to do is to defend the Christian religion as an authoritative and supernatural revelation, by showing the inadequacy of any philosophy whose "final test of truth is placed in the direct assent of the human consciousness, whether in the form of logical deduction, or moral judgment, or religious intuition." And the particular method he adopts is one he had learned from Hamilton's philosophy of relativity, whose puzzles about the absolute and the infinite he refines upon with much ingenuity; though our confidence in his metaphysical grasp is not likely to be strengthened when we find him implying that the necessary existence of an absolute apart from relations is convertible with the necessity that God should have existed alone prior to the creation of the world. The method consists in an attempt to bar the "intrusion of the human intellect into sacred things," by turning criticism on the mind itself, and making it appear that reason suffers from a fundamental defect which renders it an insufficient test of truth. The difficulties which the rationalists profess to discover in theology are in fact inherent in the very laws of human thought, and must accompany any attempt at speculation, religious or irreligious; they tell equally against all belief and all unbelief, so that to turn to reason is merely to forsake an incomprehensible doctrine which rests upon the word of God, for one equally incomprehensible which rests upon the word of man. Why for example should we take offence at the doctrine of the Trinity, when it involves just the problem of the One and the Many before which philosophy is helpless? or why make a difficulty out of God's performing miracles, when the real difficulty lies in understanding how anything can act at all?



What this meant concretely was a reversal of the growing tendency to humanize tradition by bringing it to the test of our best human insight, and a return to the old emphasis on external proofs. The legitimate object, says Mansel, of a rational criticism of revealed religion is not to be found in the *content* of that religion, but in its *evidences*; we must abstain from passing judgment on the nature of the message, until we have fairly examined the supernatural credentials of the messenger. There are two obvious elements of risk in such an attitude. It leaves religion, in the first place, helpless in case this fails. Mansel considers that he is safeguarding Christianity by disabling the weapons of rationalism, and staking everything on the historical proof for the miraculous; he does not realize that this is precisely where the opponent of Christianity is now most content to rest his case. And the second danger is, that the line of defence which Mansel adopts may result in a straining of the alliance between religion and the moral insight. In holding that our human morality is only an imperfect translation of the divine nature, and that therefore we cannot condemn revelation simply because it fails to meet our moral tests, it is true Mansel does not intend to make these last of no effect. On the whole, morality represents the truest content we can import into our conception of God. But it is far from infallible; and we are not to pronounce too hastily therefore in view of an appearance of contradiction. Mansel has to meet two main sorts of moral objection to Christianity. One is supplied by Bible narratives which represent men as called upon to act by the command of God against the dictates of ordinary morality—what Mansel calls “moral miracles.” The other is the attribution to God himself of elements of character out of harmony with our natural moral demands. In neither case is his reply convincing. Genuinely to conceive that the thing which I reprobate in man becomes in God worthy of love and reverence, is not, it would seem, a sure way of recommending religion to the mod-

ern world; and the Utilitarians appear not to have been altogether wrong when they detected in it an affinity with the obstructive forces in government and society. For the ground on which, in particular, Mansel bases the probability of a two-fold standard, is precisely the fact of authority or power in God, and the lack of any presumption, therefore, that the infinite moral governor will be bound by the same rules as the "finite moral servant."

9. Something of the same temper of mind that in metaphysics led to a reliance upon common sense, and in a form more justly open on the whole to the strictures of the radical critics, shows itself also in the group of Whig essayists and politicians whose literary activity centers about the *Edinburgh Review*. None of these are of any great importance for the history of ideas; they are clever and versatile rather than original or penetrating. But collectively they illustrate a typical attitude which is apt to be influential out of proportion to its intellectual merits. The Whig temper is compounded of a natural generosity of spirit, along with a strong infusion of judicial caution passing over into intellectual timidity. Francis Jeffrey, in some ways the most important name here, is obtrusively of this type. He is a man who moves at his ease only within the familiar field of the middle-class proprieties. His appeal is always to the "sober and correct part of mankind"; he prefers in conduct the "beaten path of morality," and has a vivid feeling for the risk attending any deviation from the "large *average* which is implied in those moral preferences that are universally prevalent." In philosophy proper this temper shows in his very moderate notion of the powers of the philosophic intellect; he finds some good in both the rival schools of his day, without taking either very seriously. This cautious estimation of the powers of the intellect is used by Jeffrey as a reason for the temperate character of his hopes for social reform. The dreams of human perfectibility, whose basis mostly had been found in the growth of knowledge and intelligence,

he discards as "utterly futile." History shows that a growing knowledge makes men neither better nor happier; in some ways they are further from the goal of their desires. The more intelligence a man develops, the more difficult it becomes to find a scheme of life to measure up to his increase of critical subtlety, and his loss of illusions; it is "knowledge that destroys enthusiasms." The political issue is close at hand; let us make the best of what we have, and not expect any drastic changes for the better. Meanwhile if we are not satisfied, as good Christians we can look to a future life. Concretely Jeffrey's political theory amounts to this: that while a nation should be dominated by its "natural aristocracy," there also should be, in the representative body, an organ to afford a direct, safe, and legitimate way in which public opinion may be brought to bear upon those in office. The great source of danger to the modern state lies in the extension of intelligence and power without the corresponding growth of political forms for making this felt; and it was, he thought, the special rôle of the Whig party to guide the new democratic forces into safe channels, to "first conciliate, then restrain the people, save them from the leaders they are beginning to choose from their own body, and become themselves their leaders, by becoming their patrons, and their cordial though authoritative advisers."

10. Sydney Smith is in some ways a more favorable example of the English liberal, though hardly so typical, since the possession of a sense of humor prevents him from taking himself always with quite the proper degree of seriousness. "I have," Smith writes, "a passionate love for common justice and for common sense"—a combination which constitutes the Whig temper at its best. Common sense in Smith's case, under the influence of his somewhat caustic wit, at times is responsible for an unnecessary harshness and lack of sympathy in his judgments; like Jeffrey, he is too ready to take the opinions of the average sensible Englishman as his standard, and to set aside what goes beyond this as "metaphysical lunacies." So of

his attitude toward religious enthusiasms that offended his own preference for a gentleman's religion within the bounds of good taste—Methodism on the one hand, and on the other "Newmania," and the growing cult of ritual. However in a way it might appear that just this coolness of temper, and the moderation of his demands on life, are connected with his love of justice; in a world which is a "sorry business at the best," man's inhumanity to man can least of all be justified. A younger, and in some respects the most brilliant member of the group, is Macaulay. In Macaulay the latent dislike of principled reasoning becomes open and aggressive. "Every man who has seen the world knows that nothing is so useless as a general maxim"; up to Bacon's day "words, and more words, and nothing but words, has been all the fruit of all the toil of all the most renowned sages of sixty generations." Quibbling about self-interest, and motives, and objects of desire, and the greatest happiness of the greatest number, he writes in a well-known passage of the Utilitarian endeavor to understand the springs of moral conduct, is but a "poor employment for a grown man," though it certainly "hurts the health less than hard drinking, and is immeasurably more humane than cock fighting." Equally sensible, unambitious, and pedestrian is his conception of the social end—not to aim at man's perfection, but to "make imperfect man comfortable"; and a new motivation to this is worth all the theorizing in the world. Macaulay could see no fault in the Constitution, but only in its administration; and accordingly he could work wholeheartedly in the faith that a Whig ministry was the one chief instrument of the world's salvation.

II. Sir James Mackintosh is the philosopher of the Edinburgh group, and in him the attitude of suspicion toward a strenuous life of the speculative intellect is displaced by a considerable degree of philosophical ardor. Mackintosh is a man of great and showy gifts—though he is lacking in steady

application,—who all his life oscillated between the claims of scholarly and academic ambition, and the attractions of the greater world of politics and society in which he was eminently fitted to shine. As might perhaps be expected from one whose ideal of speculative competence is the amiable-Cicero, his philosophical writings are more fluent than profound or rigorous. His chief claim to attention is in the field of ethics. Here, starting from the general principles of experience and utility, he attempts to turn the utility philosophy into a form less suggestive of radical consequences, and more in harmony with his own expressed belief that morals have always been stationary and are likely to continue so, and that a man ought in reason therefore to be governed, not by his own opinion about the tendency of actions, but by those “fixed and unalterable rules which are the joint result of the impartial judgment, the natural feelings, and the embodied experience of mankind.” The original source of all conduct Mackintosh finds in our primitive desires, ultimately perhaps in a few organic ones. But though at the start life may have been egoistic, it has developed the power to take an immediate interest also in things other than the private self. Pleasures—which presuppose already existing desires—may be transferred in a great variety of directions to the means involved in their attainment, which by association become as stable and indecomposable objects of desire as the original end of action. And in particular they are transferred to the mental dispositions themselves, and the voluntary actions that flow from these. It is an essential of morality that we should have come to care directly for such habitual dispositions and not merely for their consequences, and so to take pleasure in the virtuous activity for its own sake; a man who fights simply because he thinks it more hazardous to yield has not yet the virtue of courage. It is the interwoven mass of such dispositions and will-acts, become an end in itself, that constitutes

conscience, the pleasures of a good conscience thus tending to supersede the useful consequences from which this pleasure originally was borrowed.

In this way Mackintosh would reconcile the claims of utility and of intuitionism, by separating the questions to which respectively they supply an answer. Ethics is concerned with two problems—the nature of the distinction between right and wrong, and the nature of the feelings with which right and wrong are contemplated. The foundation and ultimate criterion of moral rules are indeed to be found in utility, which thus provides a support to Butler's doctrine of the supremacy of conscience; but utility is not what the mind, formed by past experience and association, commonly holds before itself consciously as its immediate standard and its motive. Men are so constituted as instantaneously to approve certain actions without any reference to their consequences; though reason may nevertheless discover that a tendency to produce general happiness is the essential characteristic of these actions. Of Mackintosh's political philosophy, only a word needs to be added; on the whole it is of a sort to illustrate the ease with which good philosophical reasons can be found to defend the indefensible—take for example the justification of the anomalies of the English representative system. The main outcome is a theory of the state as a representation of interests or classes, which are to serve as a check on one another, and guard each its own order from oppression by the rest—a doctrine well adapted, when manipulated expertly by politicians, to hinder the removal of existing class privileges, while yet paying in a verbal currency the claims of every class alike.

### § 3. *Other Intuitionists. Calderwood. Martineau. Ferrier*

1. As a philosophical school, Common Sense reached its culmination in Hamilton, and of other contemporary representatives of the tendency a brief mention is sufficient. The

most eminent name here is that of Thomas Chalmers, whose reputation, however, is due to his career as a preacher and philanthropist rather than as a philosopher. Chalmers' chief speculative interest is in the application of philosophy to theology; he perhaps comes nearest to independent thinking in the distinction which he draws, in connection with the argument from design, between the origin and laws of matter, and the *dispositions* of matter, on which last he made the strength of the argument to turn. Chalmers was most immediately influenced by Brown in his philosophical standpoint; and Brown's influence continued for a decade or so to be predominant. Among other writers of the period, all of them identified with the Scottish tradition, may be mentioned the names of John Young, George Payne, John Ballantyne, and John Abercrombie, the last the author of two popular manuals which passed through numerous editions. Isaac Taylor and Samuel Bailey were also influenced by Reid, though the connection is a much looser one. Bailey is one of the most prolific writers of the period on philosophic and semi-philosophic themes, and displays a good deal of vigor and independence of thought, especially in criticism; he deserves well as a defender of intellectual liberty.

In the thirties Brown's star rapidly waned, and Hamilton's came to be in the ascendent; and Hamilton's prestige continued to be very great until it suffered serious damage by the publication in 1865 of J. S. Mill's critical attack. While however Hamilton was generally recognized on the basis of his attainments and reputation as the leader of the school, he was not particularly successful in securing acceptance for the doctrines on whose originality he most prided himself; the peculiarities of his theory of perception were largely suffered to drop into the background, and the Unknowable was often viewed with active suspicion. Apart from Mansel, the one important disciple of Hamilton here is indeed to be found in the opposite camp of the scientific naturalists; and in

Herbert Spencer the doctrine is turned to uses with which Hamilton could have had no possible sympathy. In a few cases an open revolt took place among those who sympathized with his general position. Thus Richard Lowndes protests against the dangers of a philosophy which undertakes to make us Christians by first making us thoroughgoing sceptics, and attempts to meet Hamilton and Mansel by an argument intended to show that the mind has a power to think that which it cannot imagine.

2. A still more vigorous attack, from the standpoint of an interest in religious knowledge, upon the doctrine of the mind's imbecility, came from Henry Calderwood. Calderwood's *Philosophy of the Infinite* is an able piece of polemical writing, which puts its finger on a number of the weak points in Hamilton's position, and is hardly less than fatal indeed on the supposition that one accepts sincerely, as Hamilton did, the fundamentals of the Christian belief about God. Calderwood has little difficulty in showing the absurdity of a pretence to religious belief which denies any intelligible content to the object of belief. So Hamilton's underlying thesis that the notion of the Absolute, or God, involves an entire absence of relations, is subjected to a damaging criticism. What Calderwood himself interprets as the religious demand, is the absence in God of a *necessary* relation to anything beyond his own being. God is no less truly infinite because he has internal relations in his own nature, or because he is related to a world of his own creation; religion only needs to hold that he has an existence which does not depend on these related things, that he is subject to no *restrictive* conditions. That the full content of the infinite God does not get within our minds, or that our thought of God is not itself infinite, is indeed self-evident; but this does not prevent our having a limited knowledge of him which is true so far as it goes. Calderwood's argument here involves the recognition of what would now be called the externality of relations; being known



makes no difference to the object of knowledge itself. It involves also the repudiation of Hamilton's doctrine that the object must actually be present in consciousness in order in the strict sense to be known; "consciousness" is the sphere in which all mental operations exist, but not a sphere into which external realities are introduced. When he comes to his own alternative doctrine of the Infinite, Calderwood is less plausible. We have, it appears, an immediate intuition of God as an all-wise, all-powerful, all-just being—an intuition independent of reason, and justified sufficiently by its own self-evidence. Here obviously the influence of a robust religious faith is more in evidence than a nice perception of the philosophical problems implicated. There is not even any serious attempt to analyze and define the conception we are thus asked to take on trust, though the assurance that our knowledge of God's attributes is distinct from the notion of human attributes that go by the same name would naturally lead one to expect further explanation about their source and nature. Calderwood is also the author, among other books, of a manual of ethics very widely used for a time, in which the same dogmatic intuitionism is applied to ethical theory.

3. In America the sway of the Scottish philosophy in the colleges was for a time almost complete; James McCosh, a pupil of Hamilton's, who was called to America in 1868 to become president of the College of New Jersey at Princeton, is its most prolific and most able representative. America had natural points of contact with the intuitionist creed, in its practical and realistic temper of mind, its dislike for the refinements of speculation, and its demand for dogmatic assurance to serve as the basis for an active and aggressive life ruled by conventional religious and economic ideals; so that McCosh is inclined to pose at times as sponsor for a distinctively American philosophy. McCosh's criticisms of sensationalism are often well taken, but his own contributions to philosophy are unimpressive; he has set forth however in systematic and

convenient form the intuitionistic convictions of his school, and his history of Scottish philosophy is still useful.

4. While by the last quarter of the century the common-sense philosophy had practically disappeared as a well-defined school of thought, much of its spirit still persisted among the fairly numerous dissenters who held out against the dominant new Idealism; and a few additional names ought probably to be classified as still adherents of the traditional Scotch realism. Henry Veitch, a pupil and assistant of Hamilton, as well as his biographer, is one of the few who seem to have taken seriously Hamilton's peculiar doctrine of perception; later on Veitch brings the Scottish standpoint of dualism to the criticism of Green's idealistic monism. A similar standpoint continues to be represented by Robert Flint, who succeeded Ferrier in the chair of Moral Philosophy at St. Andrew's University. And here belongs also most properly one of the greater names of the century—that of the Unitarian minister James Martineau; though the connection is disguised by a certain shift of emphasis, as well as by Martineau's emotional earnestness and brilliant rhetorical gifts, which lend to his style an eloquence seldom in philosophers combined in the same degree with real vigor of thought. Within the general framework of a theism where God stands as the creator of a real physical world and of real finite selves, the outstanding points in Martineau's philosophy are, perhaps, the conception of true causality as always the expression of active will; of the self as the depository of a limited portion of the causal energy that resides ultimately in God, through which the self is raised as an agent above the world of passive phenomena, and given the power of free response to the Divine Archetype; of Conscience as pointing unmistakably to an eternal Lawgiver, apart from whom the notion of a law imposed upon us, and coming home to our consciousness in the sense of duty, has no meaning; of knowledge as in essence always a judgment, which affirms existence of an object over against the Ego; and of the fundamental

reasonableness of putting trust in the testimony of our faculties, alike intellectual and emotional, in their natural exercise. Martineau's argument for God has two chief steps—the metaphysical argument from Causation, which, as Power, not mere Law, is unintelligible except in terms of the activity of a personal Will; and the revelation, in conscience, of the nature of this Cause, as a righteous lawgiver and source of moral value. Martineau's most original contribution to philosophy, however, is his ethical theory of an inherent gradation of value among human motives, which we are constituted with the power of perceiving directly under conditions of their concrete presence. It is arguable that such an instinctive feeling for differences of quality is a more important feature of the ethical experience than most systems have recognized. But the absolute scale of motives in which Martineau sees it taking form has apparently been found verifiable by no one but himself. One further point against the theory is the fact that, as he admits, the same immediacy may attach to the comparison of very complex groups of motives—and the ethical situation is nearly always complex—as attaches to simple ones; and this can apparently on his showing be accounted for only by assigning to the intuitive machinery a degree of intricacy very difficult to accept.

5. Two names have been left to the conclusion of this chapter because, while they have their roots in the Scottish tradition, they depart from it somewhat widely in the general direction of the later German idealism. J. D. Morell was led by his early admiration for the writings of Thomas Brown to study philosophy in Scotland, and from thence he proceeded on a philosophical pilgrimage to Germany and to France. This continental influence shows itself in an emphasis on the distinction between Understanding and Reason, which last Morell thinks competent to ground a knowledge of absolute reality or God; the nature of Reason however he leaves obscure. Morell had read widely, and a real catholicity of

mind is in evidence in his writings; his *History of Modern Philosophy* was a useful survey of the field of contemporary thought, which helped break down the insularity of British metaphysics.

James Ferrier has much more claim to rank as an original thinker. In spite of a community with German absolutism in the outcome, Ferrier himself asserted, even with heat, that his philosophy was autochthonous; and this is substantially the case. His speculations show everywhere a Scottish background; and while he had what for his time was a considerable acquaintance at first hand with German philosophical literature, he never fully understood its point of view. Thus his criticisms of Kant are frequently wide of the mark, and Hegel he himself confesses to be "impenetrable almost throughout as a mountain of adamant."

Ferrier's philosophy shows a certain naïveté which makes him nearly always interesting and amusing reading, but which discounts somewhat the claims he is disposed to advance for it. His interest is primarily in logical system, and in the progressive discovery of chains of reasoning, and in consequence there is a character of remoteness and unreality which is seldom quite absent from his speculations. He is aware of this himself, but shifts the responsibility to the nature of philosophy. It is nothing against the philosopher, he urges, that his results controvert universal convictions, and are out of touch with the supposed realities of man's daily life; philosophizing is concerned solely with processes of rigid deduction, and *ought* therefore to hold natural human thinking cheap. In such an attitude he is clearly influenced by his reaction against the pedestrian methods of the common-sense school, and its lack of thoroughgoing logical rigor. For Ferrier, psychology with its empirical analysis of the mind is not only inadequate, but is wholly in the wrong; so that in fact one can be pretty sure of reaching truth by taking its pronouncements, and just reversing them. The only method not philosophically worthless

is that of a strict and necessary deduction from self-evident premises; and in his chief writing he makes a brave attempt to live up to such an ideal. In this there is rather too strong a suggestion of the clever pupil who shows his independence by going to the opposite extreme from the accepted opinions of his teachers; and the impression is strengthened by Ferrier's constant emphasis on the certainty and absoluteness of his own conclusions,—his *Institutes* is “incontrovertible at every point,”—and the too frequent implication that all or nearly all of previous philosophy is negligible.

In some earlier articles which Ferrier contributed to Blackwoods', there is the suggestion of a more human touch. Here, something in the vein of Fichte, we find an attempt to interpret Consciousness as the autonomous expression, not of the “mind,”—the mind of the psychologist is a mere string of changes with the one central fact of the Ego that takes cognizance of these changes totally ignored,—but of a living reality, the *man*, in the form of an *act* absolutely original and underived; the external world does not stand over against the self as its cause, but both come into being through this free act of discrimination or negation which resists or denies the impressions of sense, as the moral life grows out of a resistance to the passions and desires. It will be sufficient, however, to deal with Ferrier's doctrine in the form in which it is set forth in his chief writing—the *Institutes of Metaphysic*.

6. The purpose of Ferrier's philosophy is to show the way of escape from relativism and scepticism, in the interests of a knowledge of absolute and indubitable reality. The initial proposition on which the whole argument turns is the Hamiltonian doctrine that we never can know anything as an object without at the same time knowing along with it a subject or ego, —as Ferrier somewhere puts it, that everything is “steeped primordially in *me*.” From this proposition he proceeds to draw a number of analytical conclusions, of which the general outcome is, that the common-sense and psychological claim

that we can know matter by itself, or mind by itself, is absurd and self-contradictory. In this way we have refuted the thesis alike of materialist and of psychological idealist, since each supposes that to be real which is only one indivisible aspect of the sole knowable reality; and absolute idealism is left alone in the field.

May it not be possible however that, in spite of our necessary ignorance of matter *per se*, matter may conceivably *exist*? This Ferrier meets by the second crucial point in his system, his Theory of Ignorance, or Agnoiology, on the originality of which he specially prides himself. Here the thesis is, that as ignorance is a defect of knowledge, we cannot properly be said to be ignorant of anything unless it is capable of being known, by some higher intelligence if not by ours. The only thing which in strictness is unknowable is the absurd, the meaningless, the self-contradictory; and there is no sense in saying that we are ignorant of that which has no meaning. We cannot intelligibly speak of being ignorant of the "fact" that the part is greater than the whole, or that two and two make five. But now if we can only be ignorant of that which is a possible object of knowledge, then we cannot be ignorant of matter *per se*, since matter *per se* is *not* a possible object of knowledge. The one thing of which we can be ignorant is that same unity of subject *and* object which also is the one thing we can know. And if thus ignorance and knowledge both alike lead us to the same result, scepticism has broken down, and we have passed from Epistemology to Ontology; we have now the right to say, not merely that subject plus object is the absolute for human knowledge, but that it is the absolute without qualification. Not however *my* self and its objects merely; as the necessary datum is not *my* self and object, but only *some* self and object, it is possible to think of a connection of objects with some other self. And since we have reason to believe that *I* have not always existed, we reach the conception of an eternal Ego-

plus-objects, or of a God-thinking-the-world, as the ultimate ontological fact.

7. It is apparent that the burden of the system is carried by its initial proposition; and about this it is not so difficult to raise doubts as Ferrier would have us think. Ferrier tries to give it, as indeed he is bound to do by his principles of method, the standing of a necessary truth whose denial involves self-contradiction; but as a matter of fact it is plainly an empirical truth if it is true at all, and depends upon the results of actual observation. Now is it so that we never know anything without also at the same time *knowing* the self along with it? Ferrier himself recognizes that there are cases where at first glance at least we *seem* not to have any idea of the self in mind; and he meets the difficulty by supposing that the idea of the self may be present in varying degrees, and sometimes in so slight a degree as almost to escape our notice. But if we leave the matter here, we have an insecure foundation for a system intended to possess demonstrative certainty. Necessity which depends upon a difficult and subtle matter of introspection, where trained observers have often professed that they found no trace of the self at all, and where at least one may honestly be in doubt, is hardly what a systematic metaphysics is after. Considerations more rigorous and compelling are called for if the theory is to hold securely.

Ferrier has several suggestions to offer. The one which probably is nearest to constituting the main source of his own conviction is as follows: We cannot, he holds, possibly think of matter by itself, because the very attempt to think it thus necessarily involves the self as thinking. Try to imagine the world existing as a bare material universe with all thinking selves removed. But *is* every self gone? Must not at least the "you" who does the imagining still be on the ground in order that a world may be thought of as *not* containing any self?

About this argument however there are several points that

might be noticed. The one really self-evident thing here, to begin with, is this, that there cannot be an object of *knowledge* except as also there is someone to know; *known* objects imply a self. But this is a truism; it means that we cannot know a thing without knowing it. And unless we beg the question, and assume that nothing can *exist* apart from being known, it is still open to suppose that the existence which we know *may* be separable from the knowledge of it; in which case the fact that the *knowledge* implies a knowing self is quite irrelevant.

But now in the second place, even in terms of knowledge we still are falling short of Ferrier's claim, which is, not that a self must *be* there whenever anything is known, but that it must be an actual part of the content of knowledge. But the fact to which he is appealing is calculated, if anything, to throw doubt upon this thesis. It will hardly be denied that people have *supposed* they could think a mindless world, and that for the most part they are likely to be puzzled rather than convinced by Ferrier's proof that they cannot. But this would seem to show, once more, that when they think of a material universe the thinking self is quite overlooked—that is, is *not* a part of *what* they are knowing. Later on they may come to see that the self actually was there, and then it does enter into the content of what is known; but the unavoidable difference in the way in which we have to describe the two experiences throws doubt on the supposition that it was known before.

And now finally, even if Ferrier's argument were accepted, it would carry a difficulty for his own philosophy. For if I cannot think of anything without this presence of the thinking ego, then, contrary to what Ferrier maintains, it is *my* self plus the object which is the ultimate, and not *a* self; and not only matter, but other selves and God, can be thought by me as existing only as my objects. For if it is certain that I cannot think a mindless world for the reason that I must



be there to think it, it is in the same degree certain that a God existing prior to my human life cannot be thought by me, because I equally am present when I try to think *Him*.

A second and perhaps stronger ground that Ferrier gives for his thesis is, that unless, when I perceived an object, I were conscious of myself, I could never remember the perception as *mine*; since if I failed to recognize the "me" in the original experience, I could not find it in the later one. Here the difficulty seems to come from overlooking another ambiguity. The self, once more, must *be* there in any knowing experience, in the form of experiencing, or feeling, or "living" itself. But that there cannot be an immediate feeling experience which is not at the same time an object of *knowledge*, is a claim that needs further evidence. It is at least a possibility that an experience can be lived through without being contemplated as an object, and if so, that it may conceivably have some quality—it may be a relationship to specific purposes, or to judgments of appreciation—which later enables it when looked back upon in memory to be known as mine; since to be *my* experience is simply to be recognized as of a piece with the continuous context I learn to call *my* life.

It should be added that there is a way in which Ferrier might possibly be interpreted which would relieve his theory of some of its difficulties, and bring it very closely into line with the later and more orthodox form of English absolutism; and a suggestion of this might perhaps be found in his use of the subject-object concept to solve among other things the problem of the particular and the universal. According to this solution, what constitutes the universal is the self-aspect of experience, as common to every piece of knowledge alike; whereas the object, although *some* object must always be present, changes in its particular form from moment to moment. It is as a matter of fact difficult to see that this has any real relevancy to the historical problem of the universal, unless we

take the "self" to mean the universal bonds of connection that unify experience, and not the ego of the Scottish philosophers. But there seems no sufficient reason to suppose that Ferrier intended any such thoroughgoing reconstruction of the concept.

## CHAPTER II

### THE UTILITARIANS

#### § 1. *Bentham. James Mill*

1. The combination of radicalism in politics, and sensationalism in philosophy, which goes by the name of Utilitarianism, is by general consent the most vigorous and original product of English thinking in the first part of the nineteenth century. Spiritually the Utilitarians are descendants of the Rationalists of the preceding age. There is the same critical, unimaginative, unemotional outlook on life, which sees what it does see with extraordinary clearness and steadiness, but which is blind to the subtler shades of insight that do not lend themselves to a precise intellectual and logical formulation. The success of the Utilitarians is partly due to this fact that by admitting nothing into their scheme of things whose bearing was not to them pointed and definite, they were able to work for certain limited aims with perfect confidence and directness. They knew what they wanted, were sure it was the only thing worth wanting, and so were in a position to attempt the getting of it in the most effective way. But in consequence they tended to miss other aspects of substantial good in a world in which truth is too large to be summed up in neat and simple formulas, and where precision and limitation of end are therefore not an unmixed blessing.

Between the Rationalists and the Utilitarians there is, however, one important difference, a difference primarily of method. This comes out clearly in the contrast between the watchword of the French Revolution—the Rights of Man,—and the sacred

word of the newer movement—Utility. Why for example is political liberty desirable? Because, said the Rationalists, man has certain natural rights which are violated by the necessity of submission to a ruler or a ruling class. Because, said the Utilitarians, liberty brings about a preponderance of pleasure over pain, and a form of government which produces this result is thereby empirically justified. In some ways, though not in all, the Utilitarian method was a great practical advance over previous radicalism. To stop declaiming about abstract and inalienable rights, and to set out to locate just the points in which existing institutions had vicious results, was in so far a gain. And in this the chief importance of the movement lies. The Utilitarians are primarily political reformers. They possess a philosophy, an ethics, a psychology, an economics, but these are all subordinate to their practical ends; they are interested in them first of all as a background to their social schemes, and as instruments of attack upon tradition.

2. Utilitarianism has its proximate starting point in Jeremy Bentham. In point of time considerably the larger half of Bentham's life belongs to the preceding century, and his most important writing, for philosophy, was first published in 1789. Intellectually however he is identified closely with the modern age. Outwardly his life was highly uneventful; he lived practically as a recluse, coming into contact with the actual working of things, and with real men and women, only through the medium of a small circle of immediate friends and more or less adoring disciples. It would be possible to exaggerate the effects of this isolation. Bentham had a pretty shrewd notion of what was going on in the world of affairs, and he shows everywhere a keen and ironic sense for—more particularly—the irrational side of human nature, especially the human nature of lawyers and politicians. But in many ways he remained nevertheless all his life curiously naïve. To this it is to be added that he was naturally a man of limited sympathy

and insight—a limitation left uncorrected by a wide human experience. He had a marvellously precise, clear mind, which took delight in what ordinarily men find extremely dreary—the work of analyzing, classifying, drawing fine distinctions, codifying; Bentham might be defined, one of his biographers says, as a codifying animal. But he was deficient both in warmth and in depth; not only was he himself not moved by enthusiasms, strong feeling, uncalculating impulse, but he was entirely unable to understand such motives in other men, and, save as a matter of pathology, ignored them in his theories.

These limitations show conspicuously in the ethical theory with which Bentham's name is connected. This theory as understood by him is very simple. "Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters—*pain* and *pleasure*." Pleasure is the only good, pain the only evil; and so the consequences in terms of these are what determine the goodness or badness of an act. The proper ethical attitude is accordingly one of calculation—reckoning up the pleasurable and painful consequences, striking the balance, and deciding for the side which shows the surplus; and the most virtuous man is he who calculates most successfully. Bentham thought this capable of taking a mathematical form, and it was indeed his great aim as an ethicist to work out a calculus of pleasure that should afford scientific guidance to conduct. The primarily self-seeking character of human nature is frankly granted. "Dream not that men will move their little finger to save you unless their advantage in so doing is obvious to them"; or again, taking the whole of life together "there exists not, nor ever can exist, that human being in whose instance any public interest he can have will, not in so far as depends upon himself have been sacrificed to his own personal interest." Among the pleasures which men feel are indeed to be reckoned those of sympathy, which may lead us to acts that benefit our fellows; and since our happiness is so dependent on the good will of others, practical wisdom would urge us to

cultivate and strengthen this. But sympathy is naturally weak, and can seldom hold its own in competition with more personal claims; and in any case it is only as a source of pleasure to ourselves that it constitutes a motive. For duty, as something set over against self-interest, Bentham's system finds no place; if the word "ought" be admissible at all, he remarks, it "ought" to be banished from the vocabulary of morals. In its original and proper sense, duty is simply that which the law will punish me if I fail to do; or, in a secondary sense which Bentham identifies with "moral" duty, it borrows its force from the various mortifications that come to one who has gained the ill-will of the general public, and from the pleasures of a good reputation. The business of the moralist, therefore, is not to preach to the vicious man his duties; since vice is only a miscalculation, we should prove to him that the immoral action is against his self-interest, and show how erroneous an estimate he makes of pleasures and pains. The final criterion of conduct is, to be sure, not any particular man's pleasure, but the pleasure of the social whole; and just how we get the right to make this transition the ethical critic will need to scrutinize carefully. It is undoubtedly a very weak joint in the Utilitarian armor. But at any rate Bentham did not hold that the "greatest happiness of the greatest number" was to be enforced as a mysterious ultimate truth, dependent on disinterested motives. Its practical sanction is entirely definite and unideal; it consists in specific rewards, namely, which society attaches to the things that make for the general good, and in penalties affixed to anti-social acts.

3. It does not need much argument to show that the conception of human nature which this implies is inadequate to the facts. The sense of personal honor, the respect for settled ideals of character, the appeal which good taste and the æsthetic beauty of righteousness make to us, indeed most of the finer fruits of moral development, escape the net of Bentham's mathematical calculation of pleasures and pains. Neverthe-

less this after all affects but slightly the peculiar value of his work; in some degree it may even be a merit for his special purpose. For while Utilitarianism, it is true, is on one side a hedonistic theory of life for the individual man, it is not as such that Bentham is mainly interested in it, but as a program, rather, of legal and political reform. And from the standpoint of the reformer, many of the difficulties which beset Utilitarianism as a theoretical ethics have only a minor importance. So for example the transition from egoistic to universalistic good. For ethics this is a fundamental problem; *why* should a man, unless he happens to feel like it, adopt as his motto the greatest happiness of the greatest number, rather than the greatest happiness of number one? It may be that, as in Bentham's own case, he is so constituted that he gets most pleasure for himself by disinterested public service, and then for him the particular problem will not exist; but there seems no reason why he should plume himself morally on this account. But now if the formula is primarily intended to serve as a guide to the legislator and lawmaker, no transition is called for. We are already concerned here, not with what a man sets up as his personal end, but with what impartial reason dictates as good for men as members of society. And from this standpoint there is no inconsistency—and on the whole it represents the fact—in saying that pleasure and pain are the comprehensive human motives. At least they are the things on which the law has to rely in order to restrain wrongdoers; if, or in so far as, people are actuated by more disinterested and ideal motives, there is no need for laws and judges. It is no doubt desirable that moral actions should be the natural expression of an inner moral disposition; but it is the first business of the legislator to get external results, and not to develop character.

And the method of legislation is in large degree just Bentham's calculus. Whatever may be true of the personal life, the lawmaker has little option in the matter; his only recourse

is to a methodic balancing of the particular gains and losses which a proposed measure may be expected to occasion. So also of the end in view; it is only by testing laws and institutions in terms of specific facts of human welfare—the actual happiness or unhappiness of individual human beings—that we avoid the risk of turning our principles into “vague generalities.” If indeed a man wishes to guide his own life by the light of his inner feelings of approval, Bentham raises no particular objection; in fact he allows the possibility that as a matter of theory such feelings may play a necessary part. The recognition of the claims of utility itself is after all a case of approval. But when we set out to coerce our neighbors, at any rate, we need a more objective standard than that of private feeling or opinion; and to the central importance of this last consideration Bentham expressly subordinates all others. Much the same thing may be remarked of another special aspect of his hedonistic theory. Bentham insists that, since pleasure is the sole end, consequences, and never motives, are the objects of the moral judgment; a motive in itself is always good, since the only motive is the desire for pleasure, and pleasure cannot be otherwise than good. And this has plausibility, again, when we translate it into its practical equivalent: alike for the social critic, and for the judge who administers the law, the imputation of motives is far less useful than an investigation of the actual results of conduct, since not only is the former likely to entangle the issue in personalities, but in any case motives are for the most part only to be guessed at.

4. Bentham had started out as a Tory, with an optimistic confidence that in order to enlist the cooperation of responsible statesmen, and to get reforms accomplished, it was only necessary to show their reasonableness. Experience however had resulted in the discovery that reason is not the only force in politics—a conclusion which his own theories of human nature might have suggested sooner. To prepare the way for the Utilitarian program it was therefore necessary to reconstruct



government itself; and this led to the second main article of his creed. The problem was in substance this: how are we to get rid of "sinister interests"—private and class interests, that is, in men in authority, hostile to the general welfare? On Bentham's own showing all men are fundamentally selfish; and as everyone loves power and wealth, he will, if he is set in authority over others, naturally and necessarily exploit them for his selfish ends. The only radical remedy, therefore, is to remove the distinction between rulers and ruled, by investing sovereignty in the people themselves. A pure democracy is indeed in modern times impossible; but by letting people choose their representatives, and then binding these representatives so closely as to give them no opportunity to betray their masters, an approximate identity of interest can be secured. The political ideal of the Utilitarians therefore lay, first in the direction of extending the ballot, and then in originating devices that should subject representatives as strictly as possible to popular control.

5. It was to James Mill, Bentham's most able disciple, that the elaboration and carrying out of this political theory was more especially due. Although not himself in Parliament,—he was an employee of the East India Company,—by his pen, and even more by his personal advice and conversation, he furnished direction and motive power to those more closely in touch with the practical situation. Personally Mill was not an attractive man, and in his character the deficiencies of the rationalistic type display themselves even in aggravated form. He was able to make few allowances for those who disagreed with him on fundamentals, and an air of unpleasant dogmatism pervades his utterances. Bentham remarked that Mill argued against oppression less because he loved the oppressed than because he hated the oppressing few; and if this means that a dislike of abstract injustice and unreason was more powerful with him than concrete human sympathies, it bears all the evidence of truth. But if he was able to call

forth little love even from a favorite son, he was abundantly able to inspire respect; and by sheer force of character and intellect he came to be one of the most powerful influences of his day.

6. For philosophy, Mill's significance lies chiefly in the fact that it is he who worked out most consistently and thoroughly the association psychology which constitutes the theoretical foundation for the Utilitarian movement—a service which does not lose its value even though the attempt resulted in bringing into relief the limitations of the sensationalistic method. It is obvious that our experience conveys to us, in actually *living* it, a totally different impression from that complex of atomic sensations to which by Mill it is reduced. There is a unity to it, a significance, a sense of active and creative participation, a relationship to purposes individual and social, which has evaporated in the results of the associationists. For these results one has to adopt a secondary and more or less artificial point of view—that of a retrospective analysis into simple elements, which are then supposed to precede the actually experienced complexities, and to generate these by their combination. The association school deals with its objects in the same way as does the physical scientist; indeed it is all the time using physical and chemical analogies to explain the way in which ideas come together. Within limits there is no objection to this; but it is likely to lead us to forget that there *is* another and inner point of view which we also cannot help adopting on occasion, and that with this more immediate experience the results of an objective analysis do not always coincide, if indeed they ever do completely. Indeed the Utilitarians grant as much. Ideas are held in certain cases to follow one another so quickly—with the “rapidity of lightning”—as to form compounds that *seem* quite different from the component elements. But this contrast between seeming and reality, which has an easy meaning in connection with the world of physical facts, needs justification when applied to the psy-

chological realm, where in some sense the appearance *is* the real. If I have a feeling which is felt as so and so, what right have I to say that it really is something quite different? When I stop to examine it it changes, and so the new state *may* be different; but the earlier one was, it may naturally be claimed, just what it was felt to be.

But even as a matter of analysis Mill's results are not indisputable, particularly when we come to deal with those more subtle and elusive constituents of experience describable as feelings of transition or relationship. Mill is determined to reduce everything to the more apparently substantial and steady nuclei in the stream of experience to which we give the name sensation, and to overlook the equal though less tangible reality of the links between them. If however from the concrete experience of recognizing two sensations in temporal succession we abstract the sensations, and regard them in their separateness, we are entitled to do the same thing for the feeling of temporal transition also, since this is equally an aspect of the original fact. And with the recognition of relations, that unified and purposive character that seems to belong to first-hand experience has no need to be overlooked, particularly as, since Mill's day, this has received a very substantial backing in the science of biology; the conception of an organism, and of organic ends, not only gives point to, but renders necessary in some fashion, the introduction of ends into psychology also. For Mill, "desire" is strictly interchangeable with the mere "idea of a pleasure," and the term "instinct" is in all cases only a name for "nothing but our ignorance"; to appeal to instinct is simply to confess our failure in tracing the phenomena of the mind to the grand comprehensive principle of association. But it is about the conception of instinct that the later tendencies in psychology largely center; and they force us to take the facts of the mental life not simply as atomic elements to be grouped by association, but as aspects of a living and continuous process. Mill has done very nearly all

that it is humanly possible to do with the data of isolated sensations and their sequences; but the more rigorous he makes his analysis, the clearer it becomes that the endeavor to explain the life of conduct in terms of separate feelings breaks down of its own weight.

7. There are thus two serious weaknesses in the association psychology as worked out by Mill—on the one hand the absence of a recognition of any “activity” of the self, or the organism, in building up the structure of experience, and on the other, or “content” side, the endeavor to get along without specific facts of “relationship.” First, to dwell a little further on this latter point. The method which Mill uses to avoid the recognition of anything specifically different from sensation may be illustrated by his discussion of “relative terms.” What do we mean here by the relation as such? Simply, Mill replies, a relative *name*. Thus the relation of fathership and sonship is merely the fact that father and son are the two termini of a single series of associated objects or sensations to which we assign a name; but then we forget the sensational character of the fact, turn the name into an abstraction, and suppose as a consequence that we are dealing with a new fact, or a “relation.”

But now if we try to represent to ourselves the nature of this “train,” and ask how it came to be formed in the first place, it becomes apparent that there already are simpler relations to be found internal to it, apart from which it would disintegrate completely; and to give any intelligible account of these more ultimate relations which does not presuppose them to begin with, is a task that strains even Mill’s ingenuity. Take for example the terms “like” and “unlike.” These represent, Mill writes, the part in the process of sensation which consists in distinguishing one sensation as one, another as another, and for this it is only necessary that we have the sensations; having two sensations, and knowing that they are two, are one and the same thing. But it seems evident that if this is taken

as it stands, it is not true; if my sole data are two facts,—a red and a green sensation, say,—the two would always be as disparate as the feeling I have today is from the feeling I may have a year hence. What Mill really substitutes for the two self-identical sensations is the experience of *change from* one sensation to another. Now it may reasonably be maintained that, if there is a sense in which knowing that I have a pain can be defined as meaning nothing different from having or feeling the pain, so having a change of sensation, and knowing that I have it, are also not two things, but one and the same thing. But this experience of change is something more than two separate sensations. It is, as Mill himself calls it, a *process* of sensation, with red and green the termini of the process simply; while the intervening stage of “unlikeness” is expressly distinguished as *not* a distinct sensation. But then must it not be something different from a sensation—that is, a relation? That, in other words, which enables us here to speak of a train or process is, not, as in the case of father and son, other intervening sensations or images, but just the connecting link of relationship itself; and through this alone it comes about that we have something more than a *mere* series.

Thus Mill’s thesis that the relation of unlikeness is nothing but a name for pairs of sensations is really abandoned for the more defensible theory that unlikeness is a new element in a process of sensational change, and the empirical proof of his doctrine reduces itself simply to the claim that relations between sensations must be given somehow as factors in immediate experience, instead of having an extra-experiential source; the identification of the “process” with an experience which does not contain the specific feeling of difference, but is made up of bare sensational parts that *are* different purely as a matter of fact, is only a confusion. A similar comment is to be made upon Mill’s treatment of succession, which is a slightly more complex relation involving, in addition to a change from one sensation to another, the presence of an

*idea* of the prior one. "In the succession of ideas A, and B, priority is not the name of A, it is the name of that part of the compound process which consists of knowing A as the first of the two"—here the appeal to the idea of succession to enable us to get along without such a specific relation is almost undisguised.<sup>1</sup>

8. The same unwillingness to accept relations as ultimate underlies the whole doctrine of the concept, or class idea. The notion of "man" is evidently not the sort of particular image, or copy of a sensation, which Mill's philosophy alone can accept as real; what are we then to make of it? A general idea, Mill replies, is an aggregation of an indefinite number of individuals by their association with a particular name. For the sake of economy, the same name is applied by us to a number of—we will say—black objects. With the gradual strengthening of the association these particular instances of black are at last called up by the name in such rapid succession, that they appear commingled; and in this way black turns from an individual into a general name. This is clearly a *tour de force*, quite unverifiable, and far from plausible in itself; but in any case it will hardly work apart from an appeal to relation. For unless there were already some perception of resemblance between various black objects, there would be nothing to account for the application to them of the same name; and consequently language, instead of accounting for the universal, presupposes it at least in an implicit form.

As association fails to be a sufficient explanation of the general idea, so does it also in the case of memory. To our natural thought, memory appears clearly to involve an immediate reference to an actual past which lies outside any experience now existing—an analysis which Mill's sole reliance on association makes it impossible for him to accept. Such a transcendence, therefore, he is bound to resolve into a group of associated

<sup>1</sup> *Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind*, Chap. XIV, Sec. II, pp. 10-22, 79-82.

images. Accordingly memory is made to consist in a present sensation or idea—the remembering self—which calls up by association, so rapidly that they run as it were into a single point of consciousness, the various intermediate stages in a series at the other end of which is the experience remembered—the past self,—memory thus standing as a complex idea made up of these two selves and of the intermediate states of consciousness. Now here we have, to be sure, all the constituent ideas present in experience together, or very nearly together; but it seems to have done us not much good in the way of accounting for the knowledge of a real past. For if a present revived image does not get us beyond itself, no more does a present group of images coalescing in a compound. The whole verisimilitude of the theory results from illicitly presupposing that this revived chain of images loses its mere status of present existence, and informs us that it *is* a revival of an actual past now lying beyond any possible experiences of ours; and this is just the thing we set out to explain.

9. In the case of memory, then, we are already in contact with a fact of consciousness which it is difficult to reduce to the mere passive presence of conscious content, and where the reference to an active *belief* seems necessary in order to fill out the analysis of our experience. Belief has, accordingly, also to be analyzed into sensation or association. Now belief, according to Mill, is in the first instance nothing but the presence of sensation; to have a sensation, and to believe that we have it, are indistinguishable. Even of belief in a present fact of consciousness this is a doubtful thesis; belief is a case of judgment, and is not properly to be identified with the mere felt sense of realness. But in any case we cannot stop with such a definition. It would lead us to the conclusion that an idea has only to be present in the mind to be believed; and as Mill does not allow that there is any reality for us that is not so present, this would leave no room for unbelief, though it is easy to imagine a thing without believing it.

In the endeavor to explain this difference between belief and imagination, and at the same time to take some account of the normal function of belief in appearing to carry us beyond a mere present state of consciousness, Mill appeals again to the law of association; belief, namely, is a strong association, as imagination is a relatively weak one. But the attempt to dispense with the distinctive character of belief is successful for neither purpose. At best association can, on Mill's terms, only account for *what* we shall believe, and, possibly, for "necessity" or permanence in belief; to explain the believing attitude itself, we still have nothing to fall back on except the former identification of belief with the existence of a mental content. And then it makes no difference whether an image is brought into the mind by a strong association or a weak one; *so long as* it is there, no reason appears why we should not believe it. Nor, in the second place, will association take us outside the bare associated ideas as present facts of consciousness, while even if we agree with Mill that belief in an external object means only the assurance that under certain conditions I have received, and will receive again, the group of sensations which constitute the object, we already, in memory and in anticipation, are presupposing a belief in what lies beyond the range of existent mental content. As a matter of fact, men actually mean more than this by the existence of an object, as Mill's own language cannot avoid implying. When he tells us for example that belief in the existence of an object means that if there be *sentient organs*, at such a *time* and *place*, there will be such and such sensations, his reduction of the universe to sensations has already been left far behind; if I can presuppose myself as a physical organism moving about in a spatial world, the existence of such a world of course no longer is in question. Mill shifts back and forth between the two incompatible notions—that objects are only a certain number of sensations regarded as in a particular state of combination, and that this order of sensations is itself de-



rived from objects in nature. But in either case, once more, the fact of a belief in something not now present as an experience is there to be explained.

10. It is worth while noticing again, before leaving Mill, that the association doctrine has its chief meaning and importance for the Utilitarians not as a psychological theory, but for its practical consequences. It was in the first place a weapon to be used against the rival school of intuitionism. "The notion," says John Stuart Mill, "that truths external to the mind may be known by intuition or consciousness, independently of observation or experience, is, I am persuaded, in these times the great intellectual support of false doctrines and bad institutions. By the aid of this theory every inveterate belief and every intense feeling of which the origin is not remembered is enabled to dispense with the obligation of justifying itself by reason, and is erected into its own all-sufficient voucher and justification. There never was such an instrument devised for consecrating all deep-seated prejudices." To show that all such beliefs are capable of being reduced to particular connections of ideas, and have therefore in them nothing sacred or compelling, is the first service that the association philosophy conceived itself to be performing. But besides this negative value, the doctrine has another and more positive one. If early association can produce the intense conviction which we now observe in undesirable beliefs, then, if rightly controlled, it might be equally effective in leading to a more salutary issue. It has very generally been objected to schemes of social regeneration that they may be ideally desirable, but that they are impracticable so long as human nature remains what it is. Very well, the Utilitarian might reply; but what is human nature? A complex of particular associations of ideas. But these you can easily conceive changed. Accordingly the association theory points to one ultimate panacea for human ills—Education. Education properly conducted is capable of almost anything; and society has therefore in its own hands

the power of creating the social material to make possible its ideals of social justice.

11. It is easy to understand that the Utilitarian type of mind had no great use for religion. Of historical religion it unfortunately is true that too often it has been exploited in the interests of oppression; and even when not consciously so used, its tendency appeared to the Utilitarians to be in this direction. It exalts the virtues of obedience, and of a patient endurance of evils as the will of God, rather than the critical and militant spirit with which Utilitarianism was identified. "My father's rejection of all that is called religious belief," J. S. Mill writes in his Autobiography, "was not, as one might suppose, primarily a matter of logic and evidence. His aversion to religion was of the same kind with that of Lucretius; he regarded it with the feelings due not to a mere mental delusion, but to a great moral evil. He looked upon it as the greatest enemy of morality, first by setting up fictitious excellencies—belief in creeds, devotional feelings, and ceremonies, not connected with the good of human kind,—and causing them to be accepted for genuine virtues; but above all by radically vitiating the standard of morals, making it consist in doing the will of a Being on whom it lavishes indeed all the phrases of adulation, but whom in sober truth it depicts as eminently hateful. I have a hundred times heard him say that all ages and nations have represented their Gods as wicked in a constantly increasing progression, that mankind have gone on adding trait after trait till they reached the most perfect conception of wickedness which the human mind can devise, and have called this God and prostrated themselves before it."

## § 2. *John Stuart Mill*

1. John Stuart Mill, the oldest son of James Mill, is, all things considered, the most interesting product of the Utilitarian movement. He is interesting alike for the voluntary

and for the involuntary part he played in it; the theory that a child can be trained to be that which his teachers wish him to be has seldom had so searching a test. Mill emerged a highly serious and, as he himself confessed, even priggish young man, with his vitality unduly drained, but with a fund of knowledge that put him years ahead of his contemporaries, and a mind that worked with extraordinary precision as a logical machine. He took his place almost at once in the radical movement as a worthy successor of his father.

Mill however was hardly embarked upon his career when he was called upon to undergo an experience that left lasting effects on his intellectual character. The crisis—it might very well be called his conversion—occurred when he was about twenty years old. In a condition of nervous exhaustion the zest of life suddenly left him, and the humanitarian ends in whose service he was enlisted lost their charm; and while in this mood it occurred to him to question the basis of the philosophy which he had hitherto accepted on trust. He now saw, or thought he saw, that the very truth of the association theory was likely to jeopardize the practical consequences which alone made it valuable. The whole hope of the world lay in building up opinions and interests through association; but on the other hand the habit of analysis which constituted the method of Utilitarianism was all the while tending to undo the very ties it was most desirable to strengthen. To be sure, connections of ideas will not be affected if they are natural, and not external and artificial; but what are these natural connections according to the Utilitarians? Primarily the organic and physical ones; and of the entire insufficiency of these to make life really desirable Mill had full conviction. To exalt them alone to a place of security was to reduce life to the mere exercise of a selfish and uninspired prudence, and to undermine all the nobler feelings and virtues.

Gradually the power of feeling and of enjoyment returned to Mill; but the experience had had the effect of very notably

enlarging his sympathies, especially in the way of opening his eyes to the value of a more inner and ideal culture than Bentham's narrow and prosaic scheme of life allowed for. The reading of Wordsworth had proved his best medicine during the crisis; and Wordsworth had shown him that feelings have an importance which cannot be ignored in the interests of an unimpassioned exercise of the intellect, that they are rooted in the natural man, and supply just the perennial source of happiness which scientific analysis cannot destroy. And this deeper sense of spiritual values which Mill brought to the rationalistic logic of the older Utilitarians gives him a special significance, as a connecting link between the earlier and the later parts of the century. Mill's type of mind always retained indeed peculiarities that lessen the range of its appeal. He is lacking in expansiveness and animal spirits, in obvious enthusiasms, and, in general, in the qualities that strike forcibly the popular imagination. Habitually he is inclined to take things with a degree of seriousness that is slightly overstrained, and to subordinate too much the normal interests of living to the demands of the reforming spirit. But with this lack of emotional impressiveness is connected, on the other hand, the special merit to which he can lay claim. An ingrained fair-mindedness and reasonableness, a preference for clear thinking over rhetoric, a respect for qualified statements as against extreme and one-sided ones, and an impersonal desire to get at the precise fact, and to recognize all the difficulties in the way before taking sides, while it is not a showy or a widely popular state of mind, has its decided merits. Mill was aware of the specialized character of his own gifts, as appears in his letters to Carlyle in particular. He is rather fitted to be a logical expounder than an artist; and it is only in the hands of the artist and the seer that truth becomes impressive, and a living principle of action. But he consoles himself with the thought that there is nevertheless a useful function left for one who shall translate the mystical insight of others into the

language of argument and logic, and thus extend the range of its appeal.

2. Although they are not logically the most fundamental, it will be convenient in considering Mill to start from the social and industrial interests that more and more came to occupy his attention. Back of many of the aspects of the social problem in the nineteenth century, lies a fundamental conflict in point of view. Broadly speaking, it is the difference between the man who exalts the part which organized society, or the state, is to play in social regeneration, and the one who thinks that the state always muddles things when it interferes, and who looks for the best results therefore from a policy which allows each individual to work out his own salvation under conditions of free competition. Now the second, or laissez-faire attitude, gets a special theoretical justification in the political economy which the Utilitarians adopted as orthodox. Adam Smith had already, in his *Wealth of Nations*, pointed out the fallacies underlying the common assumption that national prosperity is a thing that governments can create by arbitrary interferences with the processes of trade. Such a doctrine the Utilitarians were prepared to receive even apart from the persuasiveness of Smith's argument. Their experience as reformers naturally would make them suspicious of an agency capable of going wrong in such a multiplicity of ways, and they were disposed accordingly to restrict the functions of the state; a fear of power in the hands of rulers was indeed the starting point of their whole political creed. Theoretically also there is a presumption against state interference; as a punishing agency—and the sanction of government is primarily its command of penalties—the state makes use of pain, and pain in the Utilitarian philosophy is always an evil. It may be necessary for other ends, but it is a necessary *evil*; and so the more we can eliminate it the better.

Limited to the field of industrial and commercial enterprise, the laissez-faire doctrine may conceivably be true. If it is

a question how to amass the greatest amount of material wealth, possibly the best way may be to leave every avenue open, and let the best man win. But there is nothing in the nature of the case to prevent such a result, even if it came about, from being coincident with a pronounced poverty in many elements that contribute to the real and substantial happiness of a nation. Great wealth need not mean equitably distributed wealth. It may be consistent with a great mass of suffering, with hard and grinding conditions of labor, with the lowering of ethical ideals and a substitution of the morals of an unfeeling and selfish competition. For the Utilitarians, however, inclined always to press their logic to an extreme, and naturally deficient in a spontaneous human sympathy, the laissez-faire philosophy seemed to be the last word in the solution of the industrial problem. And consequently when the center of the problem shifted from the middle class to the worker, the orthodox political economy crystallized into a form which stood in the way of needed social changes, and was used to bolster up industrial oppression and injustice as real as the political injustice against which the party had been enlisted. Even so elementary a principle of social good as the regulation of the labor of children and of women had to fight the economists for its recognition. There was not on the whole any hostility to the working classes; on the contrary, the Utilitarians honestly were interested in the good of all. It was assumed that prosperity would filter down automatically to the lower orders, who could look for any substantial benefit only to the class above them. James Mill, for example, takes for granted that the middle class is self-evidently the natural leader and benefactor of the working-man; and he deplores the sad case of the inhabitants of manufacturing communities with whose "afflictions there is no virtuous family of the middle rank to sympathize, and whose children have no good example of such a family to see and admire." Nevertheless there was among the economists an

unfortunate appearance, at least, of a lack of sympathy for the aspirations of the laborer himself, which the temper of the typical Utilitarian was not calculated to remove.

And meanwhile several of the most distinctive doctrines of the new school might well appear devised of set purpose to take away from the laborer any hope of a real and permanent advance. There was first the famous doctrine connected with the name of Malthus. Malthus had pointed out that progress is conditioned by a commonplace but very important physical and economic law. Food products increase at a rate less rapid than the natural increase of population. The result is that if there were nothing to hinder, the race would soon outgrow its ability to secure maintenance, and universal distress would follow. What has in the past prevented this scarcity is the very state of affairs that the reformers were trying to change. War, vice, pestilence and disease have cut down the natural increase, and so kept the race from starvation; but in proportion as these checks are abolished the danger grows.

The consequences that Malthus himself drew from his Law of Population are not wholly unambiguous. Certainly a natural impression that one is likely to get from his first statement of it, is that poverty and its attendant evils are irremediable, and that "from the inevitable laws of our nature some human beings must suffer from want"—those unhappy persons "who in the great lottery of life have drawn a blank." In a later edition he shows himself less obtuse to the case that can be made out for the humanitarians, and leaves a not unfavorable impression of a tempered goodness of heart well under the control of the intellect. To moral restraints he comes to assign larger possibilities in the way of modifying the law than had at first appeared, even if he does not grow enthusiastic over the prospect. Indeed if it be so—and his success in bringing this home to men's minds is Malthus' most solid claim to remembrance—that progress is throughout dependent on the material foundations of life, the recognition

of the law may even be a message of encouragement; as Mill points out, if we once see where the responsibility lies for the slowness of our progress in the past, we are in a better position to supply the remedy. But nevertheless the first effect of the doctrine, particularly in the mouth of one who has more confidence in the compelling power of the law than in the chance that men will show enough intelligence to evade it, will naturally be to chill the ardor of the enthusiast for progress.

The appearance of hostility to the interests of the working class was increased by the application of Malthusianism to the special problem of the distribution of wealth. The economic laws which under free competition govern the distribution of the proceeds of industry in its various forms, and which were first formulated by David Ricardo, were very generally interpreted in a way which made them practically a demonstration of the impossibility of any large benefiting of conditions. The so-called wage-fund theory, as commonly understood, amounted to saying that the amount of capital available for the payment of wages is to all intents and purposes a fixed sum, and that consequently the power to increase wages is strictly limited. Really the only feasible way is by lessening the number of individuals among whom the division is to be made. But here Malthus' doctrine comes in again. Suppose for any reason the number of workmen is decreased, and wages rise. Prosperity will remove the bars to over-population. Working men will marry earlier, and have larger families; and so inevitably their numbers will increase, and wages will once more fall. Of course the economists recognized that this simplified the situation somewhat unduly; still there was real ground for the feeling that, so far as it lay in the power of their science, they were sentencing the workers as a class to perpetual poverty, and reprehending as treason to the laws of nature their efforts to escape.

3. In connection with his treatment of the industrial and



economic problem, accordingly, Mill's wider human sympathy had a large opportunity to make itself felt. His starting point is still very definitely from individualism; but it is an individualism which shows a sense for the concrete realities of men's lives that is lacking in the earlier Utilitarians. Liberty for them had meant, primarily, either the liberty to exercise the formal right of free and equal citizenship, or the liberty to conduct one's business as one pleased; and in both cases there were implicit certain consequences not entirely favorable to the concrete freedom of the common man. The tendency of laissez-faire, it has appeared, was more immediately to the advantage of the few than of the many; and even Bentham's Utilitarianism does not point to an unambiguous issue. It is a question whether his theory of the law as a school-master placed over men to bring their natural selfishness into line with ideals of social welfare—provided the Utilitarian philosopher has the say as to what these ideals shall be—does not have in it a leaning toward paternalism; in more recent times, the greatest happiness principle has indeed been widely utilized to give "society" an autocratic power. And with that sense of the worth of liberty as a fundamental condition of human good which gets historical expression in the theory of "natural rights," Bentham was wholly out of sympathy. With Mill, on the other hand, liberty is first of all an intimate and personal value. "To me it seems," he writes in his *Diary*, "that nothing can be so alien and (to coin a word) antipathetic to the modern mind as Goethe's ideal of life. . . . Not symmetry, but bold, free expansion in all directions is demanded by the needs of modern life and the instincts of the modern mind." In his *Essay on Liberty*, in particular, the importance of having a character which does not take its hue from prevailing opinion, and of living fearlessly to suit oneself rather than one's neighbors, is urged with an enthusiasm and eloquence which evidently does not get its sole motivation from the considerations of utility which he

adduces, and which sometimes even threatens to endanger these latter.

When, therefore, Mill comes to the economic problem, the mere name of liberty does not blind him to the fact that freedom from business restrictions does not necessarily mean freedom of life; and he is prepared to modify individualistic claims substantially through a recognition that the abstract form of liberty is not a substitute for actual benefits received. On the whole, accordingly, he may be counted as one of the protagonists of that broader conception of economic science which admits the bearing of an ideal of social justice on the law of supply and demand. For Mill, the true end of social improvement is to "fit men for a state of society combining the greatest personal freedom with that just distribution of the fruits of labor which the present laws of property do not even propose to aim at"; and in the interests of this he was led to approve of a degree of political interference with industrial laissez-faire that went much beyond the traditional sympathies of his associates. He did not himself consider this, however, as a denial of Utilitarian principles, but rather as supplementing them; he would extend the functions of government not to restrict, but to enlarge men's opportunities. The advocates of laissez-faire had conceived the "perfection of human society to have been reached if man could be compelled to abstain from injuring man, not considering that men need help as well as forbearance, and that nature is to the greater number a severer taskmaster than man is to man." So long as men need aid, not to bolster up incapacity, but to "enable them afterwards to help themselves," there is no theoretical ground for refusing it. Again, law may rightly step in when the purpose is, not to determine the practices of trade, but to give effect to a general desire by guaranteeing that selfish individuals shall not nullify it through a cut-throat competition. And law may be necessary, also, to overcome the artificial advantages that accrue to excessive accumulations of

wealth, and to diminish the consequent inequalities of opportunity; Mill is considerably in advance even of present day practice in his acceptance of the right of society to appropriate the unearned increment, and even to abolish private property in land, and in his proposals for directly regulating, by an inheritance tax and otherwise, the size of private fortunes. Even for socialism Mill shows a surprising tolerance and sympathy when one considers his intellectual antecedents, though on the whole he inclines to think that changes less radical will be sufficient, and more consistent with a maximum amount of human liberty and spontaneity. With universal education, and a due limitation of the numbers of the community,—to Mill the Law of Population continues to stand as the most serious obstacle to the hopes of the workingman,—he thinks that even under present institutions it would be possible in a very short time to eliminate poverty. Two things in particular he came to regard as having great hope for the future, one the enfranchisement of women, a measure of whose political and social value he had an exaggerated notion, and the other the promotion of cooperative enterprises.

4: In political theory also, Mill inclines to qualify, in a different direction, his original individualism, and so to modify the political radicalism of his predecessors. Bentham had been impressed only with the danger that results from the interference of a ruling class with freedom; he had scarcely noticed that a tyranny of the majority is also possible. Throughout his life this worried Mill greatly. In the first instance the reason seems to have been due to his positive concern for individuality, and to a fear lest the average man should be too ready to enforce average and conventional rules of living. But combined with this, and bulking much larger in his political results, there is also the less democratic motive of a distrust of popular intelligence. As a consequence of this, he found himself out of sympathy with Bentham's interest in devising expedients for subjecting legislators to the immediate

wishes of their constituents. Rather, the aim of politics should be to leave the more competent to apply their knowledge to the work of government without continual interference, though they should be held to strict accountability for results. Similarly of the electorate: Mill was too much impressed with the dangers of democracy to fall in with the unqualified demand for an extension of the franchise, until by education men should become better fitted for their political duties; and he continued to regard as desirable some scheme of plural voting whereby superior education could receive the added weight he thought its due, though he confesses that he sees no workable form that this could take.

5. On more fundamental speculative issues also, Mill stands in a relation to his predecessors which is a little anomalous. On the whole, while he has a much clearer appreciation of the difficulties to be met, and is led consequently to concessions here and there, he conceives that he is still holding to the faith. But the concessions are often just the entering wedge that makes it impossible not to go further; and Mill is therefore constantly being reduced to desperate logical devices to prevent a more thoroughgoing break than he is prepared to accept.

The insecurity of Mill's position may be noted first in connection with his ethics. Mill brings to ethical speculation the fervor which Bentham lacked, and he brings, too, an explicit recognition of logical problems which Bentham had slighted; but the result is rather to complicate Utilitarian theory than to clarify it. He sets out in the first place to vindicate Utilitarianism against the charge of being a base and materialistic creed. On the assumption of the dominant claims of the universal happiness, the falsity of the charge scarcely needs proving; it would be more plausible to say that the ideal is too high for imperfect man. And when Mill goes on to supplement Bentham's intellectualism by a glowing vindication of the value of the social feelings, and of an ideal nobleness of will

and conduct, as against a mere calculation of external consequences, the result is one in which the most hostile critic cannot fail to find an exceptional elevation of ethical tone. But in all this Mill is constantly tending to lose sight of the real issue. He proves triumphantly that Utilitarian philosophers are far from ignoble; he is less successful in showing that they have a logical right to their moral elevation on the psychological principles they profess. When he turns to this theoretical justification, his logic, by general consent, breaks down completely. His most important innovation is his doctrine that pleasures differ, not, as Bentham had explicitly held, in amount only, but in quality as well; and this gives him a decided advantage in repelling the charge that pleasure-getting is an unworthy end of conduct. But if some pleasures are preferable not because they are more pleasant, but because they differ in kind, does not this compromise the claim that pleasantness is the sole test of good? As a matter of fact in the actual use he makes of the concept of quality, as the direct emotional perception of an essential "dignity" in human nature, and of the ignoble character of self-seeking and organic ends, Mill evidently has in mind something not easy to reduce to the mere desire for pleasure. In the theoretical explanation of his meaning, however, there is no satisfactory basis given for this. A "higher" pleasure is simply a pleasure which experts who have had experience of both prefer. Even granting the doubtful assumption that there is any single standard judgment on which all experts would agree, at best the only safe implication here is, that for human beings there are some pleasures which typically are, again, *more* pleasant than others, and which therefore they will as a matter of fact choose when they have the requisite data; no reason appears why they *ought* to choose them, or why if they fail to do so they should think themselves contemptible and blameworthy.

Equally conspicuous is Mill's failure to make a logical transition between the thesis of psychological hedonism, to the

effect that everyone necessarily pursues his own pleasure, and the standard of the universal happiness which he is mainly interested in enforcing; indeed the failure is so striking that it has passed into the text books on logic as an illustration of the fallacy known as Composition. The argument hinges on the claim that because each person's happiness is a good to that person, the general happiness is a good to the aggregate of all persons. Mill afterwards explained that in saying that the general happiness is a good to the aggregate of all persons, he did not mean that every human being's happiness is a good to every other human being; he only intended to argue that since A's happiness is a good, B's a good, C's a good, etc., the sum of all these goods must be a good.<sup>1</sup> But then the argument is nothing but an exercise in language—an objective generalization about the things to which the word "good" is applied; and as such it is no argument at all, since the real problem is one of individual motivation, and there is nothing to show that everything to which the logical term applies has a claim upon me, any more than that everything which answers to the definition of food I shall want to eat. Mill had indeed a practical solution of the conflict between individual and social good, in his confidence that, through education, the social sympathies may conceivably be so extended as in the end to identify a man's own interests with those of his fellows; but a Utopian prophecy of the future is not a sufficient substitute for an adequate logical analysis.

6. Mill's ultimate metaphysical beliefs are dealt with most at length in his *Logic*, and in the *Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy*. The *Logic* is usually held to be his most substantial contribution to philosophy. Logic in England had already, prior to the appearance of Mill's book, received an impetus in the writings of Whately, and, more especially, in the beginnings of a theory of induction, or scientific method, in the learned volumes of William Whewell.

<sup>1</sup> *Life and Letters*, Vol II, p. 116.

Whewell had been chiefly impressed by the part that hypothesis plays in scientific inquiry; and he endeavors to analyze the peculiar contribution that is made by the creative intellect in scientific discovery. Briefly, this consists in applying to the mere collection of facts a unifying conception that shall serve to bind these facts together; and the discovery of the right conception—a discovery due not to rule but to native sagacity—is the great work of scientific genius. The facts come from sense experience. But the unifying ideas are from the mind itself; and apart from them we have only empirical laws of phenomena, which are to be sharply distinguished from true causal explanation. Such concepts are conceived by Whewell, under the influence of Kant, as general forms of apprehension inherent in the mind, and possessed thereby of the necessity which data of experience lack. Unfortunately Whewell mixes up here what is in some respects an instructive emphasis on the rôle of hypothesis with a metaphysics which is of doubtful service in a scientific inquiry, even in the hands of a much more competent metaphysician than he can claim to be.

Mill, as an empiricist, takes of course the opposite road, and for him the true end of causal induction is to discover the laws of phenomena themselves. The most original portion of the book is the attempt, along lines already suggested in Sir John Herschel's *Discourse on the Study of Natural Philosophy*, to formulate the inductive methods by which science is enabled to sift out from the connections between events those "unconditional" sequences which represent true causality. To this task all logical processes are subordinate, and "formal logic" accordingly loses its exclusive title to the name; although as an account of the way in which we can, negatively, remove obstacles to the attainment of inductive truth by avoiding inconsistencies in our thinking, it still performs an important service. It follows that the syllogism must be deposed from its central place in logic, and its function reinterpreted. The fundamental act of inference is not a per-

ception of the presence already of a conclusion in a universal premise; it is resolvable into the expectation that, since a number of individuals are known to possess a given attribute, other individuals resembling them in certain further respects will be found to possess this also. In other words, inference is always from particulars to particulars. General propositions are merely "registers" of such inferences already made, and short formulæ for making more; the conclusion is not an inference drawn *from* the major premise, but an inference drawn *according to* the formula which the major premise sets forth, the real logical antecedent or premise being the particular facts from which the general proposition was collected by induction. Whether the induction was validly performed is, again, the business of the inductive methods to determine. Instead of judgment being concerned, then, as had been the prevailing opinion in logical theory, with the recognition of a relation between concepts, or ideas in our minds, what it really asserts is a succession, coexistence, or similitude between *things* or *facts*.

7. The practical value of Mill's formulation of the laws of induction is largely independent of the sensationalism which he had inherited. As a matter of fact when he is speaking as a logician he commonly ignores this, and assumes like any sensible scientist that he is dealing not with sensations, but with a world of external processes which our ideas more or less adequately construe. In the background however there always lurks the sensationalistic idealism of his school; and it remains to ask whether he is any more successful than his father in making this consistent with the everyday belief which we all assume to be valid in practice.

Mill's treatment of the existence of a physical world, to take this first, is open to the same charge of logical confusion that attaches to his innovations in ethics; an ambiguity of phrase hides an essential transition of thought. Mill tries to



avoid postulating more than sensationalistic data as the legitimate objects of knowledge, and to escape at the same time the absurdities of solipsism, by calling external objects, not independent realities, but "permanent possibilities of sensation." Strictly such a phrase, on the presuppositions of idealism with which Mill does not break, can only stand for the experienced fact that sensations do reappear under regular conditions, so that we can anticipate definite similarities in the future. But insensibly the reader is led to attach a more positive and active content to the term "possibility," and to think of it as an undefined *source* of new sensations—that which *makes* them possible—having an actual present existence in a form capable of showing causal efficiency; and it is only this second interpretation that at all corresponds to our everyday beliefs and language. Explicitly Mill does not commit himself to any but the former meaning, for which what we call an object is just a cluster of sensations, plus the anticipated possibility of getting other sensations if we go to work the right way. So far as an independently existing world goes, his explanation is merely an account of the manner in which we come to a *belief* in this—a belief which, as the explanation would appear to show, has no legitimate basis in fact. But in spite of this he continues to express himself in these same illegitimate terms, as if they were quite justified; whenever it is necessary to give verisimilitude to his opinions; in fact he cannot avoid this even when he makes the effort. Thus his explanation of the way we come to a belief in other selves will only work by presupposing that my neighbor's *body* is a real physical object, and not a part of my own psychical content.<sup>1</sup> Mill's own real working opinion apparently is, not that an object means no more than a group of sensations, but that a real existence of some sort is the occasion of sensations in us, although there is no reason for supposing these to have any likeness to their

<sup>1</sup> *Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy*, Vol I, pp. 255 ff.

cause. It is this whole conception of an independent cause, however, and not its knowable character simply, that his explicit analysis has undermined.

In the more general problem with which empiricism has to deal—the possibility of beliefs that do not arise from the connection of particular experiences through the laws of association,—Mill's position is also not entirely straightforward. In the end he finds himself forced to give up his father's assurance of the all-sufficiency of association, and to grant that a few residual facts are beyond its competency to explain. This is at any rate true of the power of memory to reach out into the past, of belief as an ultimate and unanalyzable attitude, and of some at least of the simpler relations; probably also it is true of the unitary self, since the consciousness of a string of psychical facts as a unitary series cannot easily, he allows, be identified with the mere separate items of the series, or with one member of it among others, but must in some mysterious way be present to them all. At this point Mill, after admitting that in principle the doctrine breaks down, ought presumably to have set about recasting the association philosophy; instead he thinks it enough to take such facts as a "final inexplicability," which it is best to accept without any theory about them. And thereafter he leaves them on one side, and returns to his faith in association as a universal solvent.

8. The most crucial problem, for Mill, is that of "necessary" beliefs; and here he holds consistently, as against any form of intuitionism, that there is no reason to suppose these to have been acquired otherwise than by experience—that is, by the repetition of sensational data independently of further assumptions. The "necessity" of a belief is due solely to the difficulty we have in breaking down an association between particular ideas; we need only suppose a connection to have been so frequent and undeviating between two ideas as to make them practically inseparable, to have all that is required to account for so-called necessities of thought. It follows that

any such necessity might conceivably be overborne by fresh experience. Mill accordingly argues vigorously against the criterion of "inconceivability" on which some of his contemporaries relied. There is to begin with, as he points out, an ambiguity in the meaning of the term. Our inability to conceive the contrary may have reference in the first place to a difficulty in *believing* something that past experience has seemed to discredit, even though we can quite easily *imagine* the more familiar association of ideas broken up. Thus the notion of the antipodes will at first be pronounced inconceivable, which does not prevent a more disciplined mind, however, from accepting it implicitly. Here it is natural to agree with Mill that association plays the central rôle, and that nothing in the nature of necessity is involved. But there is another sort of belief that offers more trouble. Can we agree also that in such judgments as "two and two make four," "parallel lines can never meet," "a round square cannot exist," we equally have beliefs that are due to mere repetitions of experience, the experiences in these cases having been so multitudinous and so invariable that the connected ideas cannot, in the absence of a contrary model, be separated from one another even in imagination?

There seems no reason to question the apparent fact that conviction here is the result of analysis rather than of repetition, and that if repetition is called for, it is only to assure us that the analysis was correctly performed. The dispute turns largely on our theory of conceptual knowledge. Take as an example the truth that the angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles. If we suppose with Mill that this is a generalization from all the particular triangles we have examined, it follows indeed that the judgment falls short of necessity; and not only that, but in strictness it never is quite exactly true, since we have never in our experience, probably, come across a triangle formed of perfectly straight lines. But as a "necessary" truth, the judgment is intended to apply to

phenomenal triangles only in so far as they approximate the ideal and perfect triangle, of which last alone geometry professes to speak. Now since for the sensationalists an idea is only a psychical image representative of an indefinite number of particular objects, our notion that we can think the "ideal" triangle can only be an illusion; and if we can thus deal only with particular triangles, Mill's conclusions would seem to follow.

If, however, we suppose our thought, whatever may be its foundation in the image, to have the power to mean, or to refer to, abstract and precisely definable characters viewed without reference to their concrete embodiment, and to develop out of them new and ideal constructions, the possibility is open that we may be able, by scrutinizing these constructions, to discover further relationships involved in them which are necessary, in the sense that they always must be there if the conditions which imply them are there. And for this no indefinite repetition of particular instances is required; we can be sure that the angles of a triangle *never* will be more or less than two right angles, because the truth, though not an actual part of the definition, is involved in what we have defined a triangle to be. It would still remain so that the particular empirical sequences in the world do not share in this abstract necessity of relational implication; and since for Mill the sequences alone are real, the device would not have seemed to him to meet his philosophic needs. If "two and two make four" means simply that, if we put two pairs of objects together, we shall on counting find only four present, it is true that nothing but experience is responsible for our not expecting a fifth object mysteriously to have insinuated itself into the group. But if, as Mill would have to hold, everything in mathematics that goes beyond such empirical generalizations is a matter purely of verbal definition, and not objective truth at all, no explanation is available of the success with which these "unreal" truths, discovered only through the manipula-

tion of ideas, fit into and enable us to anticipate the actual facts of experience.

9. One case in particular of a necessary truth is of special importance, since it is implicated in the logic of induction. How do we account for the universality or unconditionalness of causal law, if a belief in the uniformity of nature is wholly a generalization from experience? Mill's answer seems at two points to presuppose the result which he is trying to explain. Causality is clearly one of those beliefs which, on Mill's theory, have a compulsion only to be accounted for by an exceptionally wide and uncontradicted experience; and Mill accordingly talks about instances of causal connection as having met us every moment of our lives. It is hard not to suppose however a confusion here. It is of course true that we are surrounded by a countless number of what, from the standpoint of scientific knowledge where the causal law already is assumed, are cases of causal happenings; and it also is true that from the standpoint of mere presuppositionless experience, we are surrounded by innumerable facts of *sequence*. But that all these sequences present themselves as unconditional sequences is *not* true; far from its being so that for our knowledge every event is found to have a cause, in the majority of cases the cause is overlooked, and many times we fail to find it even when we seek. Were we not already convinced that everything must needs have a cause, the effect of experience would be bewilderment rather than an unescapable association.

A similar begging of the issue is to be found in Mill's account of the way in which the general law of causation acquires a certainty superior to particular laws, so that in this instance the major premise of our causal syllogism, instead merely of registering past inferences, adds logical weight to the expectation of causality in the new case. The reason is, that a generalization that extends to all the facts of experience overcomes thereby a logical defect attaching to narrower infer-

ences. The difficulty with the method of a simple enumeration of instances for the discovery of causal law, is that it affords no guarantee that a connection, even when it has always been found to be present, may not perhaps be due to chance—to accidental collocations, or to the accidental absence of counteracting agencies. And if we suppose the range of a generalization so widely extended that there is no time or place or combination of circumstances but must afford an example either of its truth or falsity, then its truth cannot be contingent on any collocations save such as exist at all times and places, nor can it be frustrated by any counteracting agencies unless by such as never actually occur. But the logical theory on which such an argument rests merely gives us ground for believing that, *if the world is causally organized*, we are likely to have picked the true cause rather than a chance coincidence; as Mill himself puts it, we are left with the alternative between the right cause, and no cause at all. This ought no doubt to be sufficient if we have already granted the causal assumption; but Mill overlooks the fact that it is precisely a ground for the preference of some cause to no cause at all that he is called upon to show.

Meanwhile in estimating Mill's distrust of necessary principles, it is only fair to remember once more that he is interested not only in a metaphysics, but in the worth of a certain practical attitude. And so long as it is necessary to break down dogmatism and prejudice, there is an advantage in calling attention to the fact that our mere ease or difficulty in thinking a thing is not bound to legislate for the universe. When however this purpose is accomplished, it seems possible also to go too far in a distrust of human nature and the reach of human thought; we are not called upon to be forever telling ourselves that our beliefs conceivably may all be wrong. What we are really interested in is the stability of belief, and not its possession of a special logical character called necessity. On the assumption that the right to believe does rest upon logical

necessity, the disproof of necessity must of course undermine our assurance; but this assumption is not itself a necessary one. And when we find Mill insisting that a mental compulsion constitutes no title deed to the possession of ultimate truth, and urging the absurdity of supposing that the "mind should be blindly determined to represent truly the reality which it does not know," it is pertinent to observe that this "absurdity" is a literal description of Mill's own account of memory, in whose veracity he nevertheless unhesitatingly confides.

10. Mill himself seems in the end to have come to feel to some extent that empirical sequences do not have the only claim upon our tolerance, and to have relaxed the Utilitarian attitude of hostility even to ultimate religious beliefs.<sup>1</sup> He allows that along with conceptions that have a scientific foundation, there are others which appeal to us in a different way; and he does not deny that these last may also have a value. "I think," he writes, "that as mankind improve, they will much more realize two independent mental provinces, the province of belief, and the province of imaginary conjecture; that they will become capable of keeping them distinct; and, while they unite their belief to the evidence, will think it allowable to let their imaginative anticipations go forth, not carrying belief in their train, in the direction in which experience and study of human nature shows to be the most improving to the character, and most exalting and consoling to the individual feelings." If no positive facts stand in the way, Mill would thus allow us at least to play intellectually with any view of things that seems likely to act as a spur to the moral life. It is not that our feelings have in theory any connection with truth; the whole right is based solely upon pragmatic considerations. It is a case of looking on the brighter side of things, the cultivation of a cheerful disposition; and it is to be approved for the reason that cheerfulness is better than despondency. A belief in God may have this value; the thought of a higher co-

<sup>1</sup> *Three Essays on Religion.*

worker in the affairs of the universe tends to the enlargement of the general scale of the feelings, "the loftier aspirations being no longer in the same degree checked and kept down by a sense of the insignificance of human life—by the disastrous feeling of 'not worth while.' " The evidence for this creed, indeed, "if evidence it can be called, is too shadowy and unsubstantial, and the promises it holds out too distant and uncertain, to admit of its being a permanent substitute for the religion of humanity." But the two may be held in conjunction; and one is "at liberty to indulge the pleasing and encouraging thought, that its truth is possible."

The trouble with such a position plainly is, that hope that stops short of anything that can be called belief is too little substantial to wear well under the stress of human affairs. Probably Mill had himself, in his later years at any rate, rather a greater confidence here than his philosophical terminology would allow him to express; indeed he seems definitely inclined to hold that, in the appearance of design in the world, there is positive evidence of a sort for the existence of a being who may serve as the God of religion. It is perfectly clear to him however—and this is his most settled opinion in connection with the whole matter—that if this be so, God must be a finite God with definite limitations. For the fact of evil is too omnipresent in the world of nature to make possible the belief in a God who is both benevolent, and all-powerful; "if the Maker of the world *can* all that he *wills*, he wills misery, and there is no escape from the conclusion."

§ 3. *The Philosophical Radicals. Bain. Austin.*  
*J. F. Stephen. Sidgwick*

1. Of the Philosophical Radicals who carried the Benthamite doctrines into politics, George Grote, the historian, is the only one who can be regarded as belonging to the history of philosophy; and Grote, while from early youth he was deeply



interested in metaphysics, and did good work in the historical field in connection with Plato and Aristotle, left behind little of importance apart from a few posthumous articles on ethics. In these the point most deserving of notice is his elaboration of the "social" character of moral obligation. Society, in its collective capacity, determines what sort of conduct it wants from the individual, and in the form of authority imposes this upon him. In return it undertakes also to reward this social subservience by an attitude of benevolent approval and protection. And the social sentiment is a complex state of mind due to the association of the acts demanded by society with the feelings, or social judgments of approval and disapproval, that men come to look for as their natural due. This is a laudable attempt to bridge the gap which Bentham had left between the individual and the social judgment; it seems clear however that it still leaves the desire for personal benefits the only real *reason*—for mere habit is not a reason—why a man should, when he thinks about it, hold himself bound to postpone his own happiness to that of the community if the two conflict. And in the end indeed Grote accepts the moral supremacy of society as represented by the collective opinion of the majority, and the right of society in consequence to exact obedience from the individual, as something so self-evident to the moral judgment that the philosopher is not called upon to demonstrate it.

2. In psychology, the tradition of James Mill was carried on by Alexander Bain. Bain represents the association psychology on the point of passing over into the more modern conception of the science, through the explicit recognition of the need for looking beyond empirical trains of sensations to their physical and organic conditions. Such a recognition had originally played a large share in the speculations of Hartley, the founder of associationalism, but it had centered about a theory of nerve process which friend and foe alike agreed in declining to take seriously; and with Hartley's Utilitarian fol-

lowers, as has appeared, interest was exclusively directed to the analysis of mental states. Some credit for calling attention to the physiological basis of mind belongs to the phrenologists, who in Great Britain were ably represented by George Combe; but phrenology was too fully committed to its peculiar dogmas to be in good odor with scientists generally.

Bain's chief addition to the machinery of sensationalism is his acceptance of a primitive spontaneity, or activity of the organism, originating in internal impulses independent of outward stimuli. Bain declines indeed to go very far in the way of admitting definite instincts; mostly he thinks of this activity as diffusive and vaguely directed, and as taking on specific forms only through the chance production of a sense of pleasurable feeling which accompanies heightened activity, and which then detains and fixes the hitherto random movements. His recognition of activity, however, enables him to throw new light on many psychological matters, especially in connection with the theory of emotion and of volition, where James Mill had been notably weak. A similar advantage, through a clearer recognition of the part played by the muscular feelings and the sense of resistance, might have accrued to his theory of perception; but he partly forfeits this advantage through his idealistic insistence that after all the external world is not revealed to us as *that which* resists our muscular energy, but is no more than the experienced feeling itself, and so one psychical fact among others. As a matter of fact, if "primitive spontaneity" refers only to a peculiar kind of sensation, and not to actual movements of the physical organism, it is robbed of all significant meaning.

Two further points, also connected with the notion of activity, deserve notice here, because of their bearing on general philosophical problems—the psychological account of belief, and that of our belief in causation in particular. To begin with the latter, Bain avoids the logical difficulty present in J. S. Mill's account of the inductive principle, by his accep-

tance of an original spontaneous tendency to assume that familiar sequences will be repeated—an assumption frankly begged, and recognized as having only a practical and not a theoretical justification. The more general theory of belief is usually regarded as one of Bain's most original contributions. There are however difficulties in determining precisely what this theory is. It contains two elements which do not fuse very readily; and Bain's growing perception of this leads him to modify his original formulation, until in the end the most distinctive feature of it is refined away. Belief arises, Bain holds, in a situation in which immediate "spontaneity" has been displaced by hesitation, and the use of secondary means; when any creature is found performing an action, indifferent in itself, with a view to some end, and adhering to it, we say that the animal possesses confidence, or belief, in a certain *arrangement of nature* relevant to the end he is after.<sup>1</sup> Now this, in so far as it is unambiguous, amounts to saying that belief is constituted by a sense of confidence in the order of experience. Its original source is a "primitive credulity," or a disposition to expect *any* sequence of ideas that has once occurred to be repeated; and this credulity, in the more developed intellectual life, continues as "belief," in so far as sequences have remained uncontradicted by later experience. Here the only "activity" involved is in the flow of ideas, belief being the unimpeded anticipation of a coming idea; in other words, it is Bain's account of causation again, or of a belief in the uniformity of nature. What Bain would like to do, however, is to connect this also with the actual physical action which the situation implies, and to find that which distinguishes belief from imagination in an "impulse of perseverance," or a "preparedness to act," which is itself incipient action. But he was reluctantly driven to the conclusion that it is impossible thus to reduce the actual content of the believ-

<sup>1</sup> *The Emotions and the Will*, pp. 568 ff. (1st Ed.); pp. 505 ff. (3rd Ed.)

ing experience itself to the sense that we are acting or about to act; and accordingly the theory tends to leave us only with the more familiar notion that belief is what *occasions* the continuance of the action rather than identical with it, and action the *test* of a genuine belief instead of its intrinsic nature.

Meanwhile the former of the two accounts has a close connection with another of Bain's doctrines—that of "fixed ideas." Rational action, or volition in the proper sense, is, for Bain, action directed toward the securing of pleasure, or the avoidance of pain. But there is also another and non-rational form of action, which previous Utilitarians had not recognized, due to the automatic tendency of ideas that hold possession of the mind to issue in appropriate movements. And it is this conception of ideo-motor action which suggests Bain's most original contribution to ethics. It has appeared that a difficulty exists for hedonism in the need for explaining how we come to adopt other people's happiness as a motive, especially when this clashes with our own. The new solution is, that in sympathy, as a source of social action, we have the most striking example of the Fixed Idea. The thought of other people's pains and pleasures, embedded in the mind through many repeated forms of gregarious experience, tends without volition to carry itself over into conduct; and it may be so compelling as to overbear the rational desire for pleasure of our own. Bain might thereupon perhaps have been expected to tell us that, since sympathy is irrational, it should be eliminated as speedily as possible in favor of conscious volition; but as a matter of fact, as he proceeds, it appears to shed the characteristics that belong to fixed ideas elsewhere, and to become sufficiently reasonable to retain its claim upon us even at the expense of that desire for pleasure which elsewhere is regarded as essential to a rational motive. The best reconciliation Bain can suggest is, that at some time in the future society may make such arrangements as will repay the sacrifices to public duty that often go at present uncompensated, and thus may

overcome the opposition between private and public good; though we are not told why this future possibility should be allowed to have weight in our judgments on conduct in the meantime.

3. Two further names may perhaps be bracketed together here, though about their proper classification some question might be raised—John Austin, and Sir James Fitzjames Stephen. Philosophically both are good Utilitarians in that they accept in ethics pleasure as the end, and utility as a standard; but in their ultimate sympathies it is less clear to what extent they are loyal Benthamites. Not only do they find in religion a solution of certain theoretical difficulties in a manner that recalls Paley rather than Bentham, but also in both the passion for reform is to say the least very much subdued. Austin's main work is in the field of jurisprudence; but he introduces this with an account of the ethics of utility which has many merits in the way of clearness and logical precision. Obligation means for Austin nothing but the command of a superior, able to enforce his will by rewards and penalties; and just as legal duty therefore is identical with the commands of the political sovereign, so duty in the wider sense presupposes a divine sovereign. Utility is thus not the ultimate source of morality—this lies in the will of God; but if God wills, as we may suppose he does, the general welfare, utility continues to serve as an *index* by which we can infer, from the effects on human happiness, the nature of the laws which God imposes. These take the shape of general rules, whose dignity and universal character it is unsafe to tamper with in an attempt to apply calculation to particular cases; Austin inclines to think they ought to be followed in their absolute form, and no exceptions allowed. And for the most of our conduct we do not even need to have utility actually in mind; it is enough to follow general sentiments of liking and aversion. These sentiments however are not inscrutable and innate, as the intuitionists maintain. It is just the dan-

gerous consequences of the wrong act to which originally disapproval attaches; and in practice therefore feeling is no more opposed to utility, than the rudder of a boat is opposed to the sail, or to the breeze which swells the sail. In Austin's political speculations there is the same strong emphasis on an abstract conception of sovereignty, as against the competing doctrine of "rights." Bentham also, it is true, had found the idea of natural rights obnoxious. But it had been mainly on account of its connection with unreasoned forms of emotional bias which hamper the reformer; in Austin the motive tends in the quite different direction of a willingness to exalt legalism over the spirit of liberty.

4. The need of appealing to religious sanctions if Utilitarianism is to hold its ground against egoistic hedonism gets also an interesting setting in J. F. Stephen. With Stephen it is motivated by temperamental antipathies. To any form of effusive sentiment he had a strong aversion, but especially to the sort of sentiment which in his day was turning democracy and social reform into a religion of humanity. Stephen was himself of the hard-headed, unenthusiastic, personally ambitious type, scornful of ideals that are not to be attained by strenuous human effort under actual working conditions, with strong personal affections in a narrow field, a frank indifference to the remoter portions of mankind, and an honest hatred of his enemies. The demand that we substitute for the interests of ourselves, our friends, and our country, the welfare of the human race at large, seemed to him a silly affectation. Even in his earlier days, when he was an orthodox Christian, he had slight affinity with the peculiarly Christian ideal. The humanitarianism of the Sermon on the Mount repelled and perplexed him; it would, he declared, if lived up to, turn the world upside down. If therefore we ask whether we are in duty bound to go further than the current morality of the man of the world, the answer is, Yes, if there is a God and a future state; No, if there is no God and no future state. If

there is to be any firm basis for the ideal of the general welfare, it must be found, not in an impossible extension of humanitarian sympathy, but in a "Christianity founded on Hell," through the belief in a future life which an omnipotent God makes use of to enlist man's self-interest in the service of a universal morality. Such a God is not himself to be regarded as benevolent; but his law, though stern and inflexible, is noble, and excites a feeling of awful respect for its author.

5. The ethical theory of the Utilitarians has another distinguished representative in Henry Sidgwick, though here also a question might be raised about the classification. Sidgwick is indeed a professed opponent of sensationalism and positivism; and even in ethics he introduces modifications that amount almost to a revolution. The nature of his most important book, the *Methods of Ethics*, is suggested by its title. He proposes to examine, not primarily competing notions of the ethical end, but the various ways to be found in the moral consciousness of mankind of attaining reasoned convictions about matters of duty. Of these he distinguishes three main types—the calculation of consequences in terms of egoistic satisfaction, immediate intuition, and pleasure calculation directed toward the universal good, this last being identical with Utilitarianism. After a remarkably close and realistic examination of the facts of the ethical judgment, the conclusion is reached that none of these methods is without serious imperfections; and none can in practice be adopted to the entire exclusion of the others. Between the intuitional and the Utilitarian methods, an approximate reconciliation is in principle fairly simple. The judgments which express the immediate dictates of conscience everywhere imply as a matter of fact a reference to social happiness to support them, and to explain their limitations and qualifications; while at the same time we are accustomed to make explicit reference to utility only in exceptional cases, the majority of our judgments being, as the Utilitarian may agree with the intuitionalist, di-

rect and unmediated. Between egoistic and universalistic hedonism, however, there is a more serious lack of coincidence. Common-sense morality recognizes both the claims of prudence and the right to personal happiness on the one hand, and the obligation to consult the common good on the other; and there is no method of fully identifying the two demands. Morality is thus incapable of being completely rationalized, unless indeed we go beyond the sphere of scientific ethics, and postulate a universe prepared to make up somehow to the individual his sacrifices to duty.

In terms of the traditional problems of ethics, then, Sidgwick casts in his lot on the whole with the Benthamite doctrine of the general happiness as the ultimate good. But he does this with far greater exactness of analysis than any of his predecessors; and as the outcome of this analysis he makes two modifications in particular which change the whole complexion of the theory. In the first place he agrees with Butler that pleasure is not necessarily in point of fact the only thing at which we *aim*, since in many cases no pleasure would be forthcoming unless we already had an independent desire for certain objects or activities; the only thing that Utilitarianism need claim is, that apart from pleasure nothing approves itself to reflection as *worth* desiring. But also he holds that an appeal after all to intuition is required even by a hedonistic theory of pleasure as the *Summum Bonum*. When a moralist calls pleasure the good, he means to imply, not simply that we try to get pleasure as a matter of fact, but that a *maximum* of pleasure is what as reasonable human beings we *ought* to aim at. But this "ought" introduces a new element over and above any appeal to facts of feeling. Implied even in the recognition of the claims of prudence over mere temporary desire, this is particularly apparent when we ask why we should prefer the universal happiness. Sidgwick finds the new element in an immediate deliverance of the rational consciousness, based on the self-evident perception that a greater amount of good is



better than a less. Grant that pleasure is to be accepted as a good at all, and a man can see by a direct intuition that he ought not as an impartial and rational being to prefer a present lesser good to a future greater good, and that he ought not to prefer his own lesser good to the greater good of others. It is this intuitive act of reason, carrying with it a necessary reference to obligation, which constitutes the most ultimate fact of the ethical consciousness.

## CHAPTER III

### AUTHORITY AND REASON IN THEOLOGY

#### § 1. *Arnold. The Oxford Movement. Newman*

1. While secularism was being fashioned into a thorough-going philosophical creed by the Utilitarians, an intellectual ferment along very different lines was taking place in the world of religious thought; and though it is true that the results of this for philosophy are meagre, it engages so large a share of the intellectual energies of a generation of Englishmen, that it can hardly be left unnoticed. There are several distinct and even sharply hostile forms which this theological renaissance assumes; but in a general way they have a common character even in their diversity. Their interest lies less in the quest for abstract rationality or truth, than in the concrete and the historical—in the institutional forms of the Church, that is to say, and the emotional realities of religious experience as these center about historic dogmas. It is by anticipating, somewhat faintly to be sure, the significance of the historical outlook, which the rise of the notion of development was later to bring to the front, but which the academic philosophies had hitherto ignored, that the religious movement makes its chief speculative contribution.

In the precursors of the intellectual revival in the Church there is little prophecy of its future course. Richard Whately, the most commanding figure here, is primarily a logician, and spiritually has more in common with the milder rationalism of the preceding century than with the theologians who im-

mediately followed him. Whately's most influential work is in the field of formal logic, to which he gave a new impulse by helping to clear up the confusions due to its entanglement with epistemology, and by more clearly recognizing its practical function within these narrower limits; logic for him, that is, is not a method for the discovery of truth, but has its use primarily in detecting fallacies in argument. An interest in puncturing fallacies is the most characteristic feature of Whately's robust and acute, but not over-sensitive mind; in religion it directs his attention to the field of Christian Evidences, of which, conceived as a process of unfolding the implications in the premises of the unbeliever, and so bringing him to admit your conclusions, Whately thinks very highly. A striking example of his method is the readable, ingenious, and quite irrelevant *Historic Doubts about Napoleon*, which is intended by a *reductio ad absurdum* to show how unreasonable are attacks on the historical truth of Christianity. Of the same intellectual type as Whately is R. D. Hampden, now chiefly remembered as the storm center of two bitter ecclesiastical controversies in the era of Tractarianism; and Adam Sedgwick the geologist, whose *Discourse on the Studies of the University of Cambridge* contains a defence of natural religion which acquired a reputation not at this day easy to understand. But the tendencies which Whately and Sedgwick represent had no great immediate results. The only name connected with Whately's group which really counts for much in the troubled period about to be inaugurated is that of Thomas Arnold, and his importance lies in a different direction.

2. The most prominent character of Arnold's mind is his genuine but slightly over-emphatic piety. The religious sentiment is a sensitive one, and when we set out actively to cultivate it, there is unfortunately a chance of interfering with its healthy growth. Arnold is lacking in any sense of danger here, any check to his clerical enthusiasm. It was the outcome of his philosophy that, in the words of Dean Stanley, the strong-

est earthly bond should be identical with the bond of Christian fellowship, that the highest earthly power should avowedly minister to the advancement of Christian Holiness, that crimes should be regarded as sins, and that Christianity should be the acknowledged basis of citizenship. On principle he is led to discountenance any disposition to stand outside his own party standpoint and to judge Christianity impartially; this is incompatible with the cultivation of that feeling of "intense admiration" which is the thing most necessary to human perfection. Two current views about the proper relation between government and religion were in the field in Arnold's day. One was the extreme theory of a supernatural church, to be noticed presently in connection with the Tractarian movement; at the other extreme lay the purely secular theory which the Utilitarians represented. To Arnold both theories were equally repugnant; they were the "two great opposite forms of all human wickedness." What he wants is to retain the supposed advantages of a national concern for religion and morality, without tying to any mystical and superstitious notion; and he thinks the only way to do this is in terms of his own conception of the Church as a great society for the encouragement of goodness and piety. Church and state according to this view are not distinct and possibly competing institutions. "A Christian society with a general control over human life, with a direct interest in the moral welfare of its members, and a sovereign power of effecting this welfare by laws, rewards and punishments, is already a Church"; the true ideal of the State is a Rugby School writ large. Arnold's aim is thus not to secularize the Church, but to Christianize the State, and so give practical efficacy in England to the faith of those who "earnestly look to the Church as the appointed and only possible means of all earthly improvement for society."

One practical question confronts such a theory; what is the nature in particular of the ideal which a given society is to impress upon its members, and who is to determine it? This

issue Arnold faces boldly. "Every people in that country which is rightfully theirs may establish their own institutions and their own *ideas*"; since therefore England is a Christian country, it not only has a clear right to make Christianity a state religion, but Arnold finds it hard to understand the condition of mind of any man who could have the least objection to this. He even anticipates that the time may come when the rejection of Christianity would be clearly a moral offence, and when "profane writings would be as great a shock to all men's notions of right and wrong as obscene writings are now, and the one might be punished with no greater injury to liberty of conscience than the other." It is his "favorite principle" that the "world is made up of Christians and non-Christians; with all the former we should be one, with none of the latter. I would thank the Parliament for having done away with distinctions between Christian and Christian; and I would pray that distinctions be kept up between Christian and non-Christian."

Arnold's theory had little chance of affecting the practical course of events. To say nothing of the fact that it proposed to maintain or increase civil disabilities whose ultimate disappearance most liberal minds perceived to be inevitable, its very inclusiveness even, as applied to Christians, made it difficult to defend on grounds of principle. There may appear some justification for compelling a man to subscribe to a creed if you believe that in this creed all saving truth is contained; but there seems no particular point in such compulsion if the belief in question is so vague and attenuated that nobody can tell precisely what it means in a given man's mouth. "If the Arian," says Arnold, "will join in our worship of Christ, and will call him Lord and God, there is neither wisdom nor charity in insisting that he shall explain what he means by these terms." But when an article of subscription has confessedly become a formula which anyone is at liberty to interpret as he pleases so long as he does not deviate from a pre-

scribed phraseology, its virtue has about departed. It was a much more virile ideal of the Church which was to become genuinely an issue in Arnold's day.

3. For this the occasion was in part the encroachment of liberalism upon theology, for which Arnold also stood in a mild way, but also and more immediately the threatened invasion of the traditional rights of the Establishment at the hands of the secular power. For some time ecclesiastical reforms had been impending in the political field which were throwing good Churchmen into a state of exasperation and alarm. The Oxford Movement in its inception was a concerted effort to stem the tide by infusing a new spirit into the religious life within the Church, which should exalt its spiritual power above danger from worldly forces. And since it is upon its continuity with primitive Christianity that the Establishment bases its special claims, a revival of the piety, the enthusiasm, and the consistency of the church of the early Fathers became the end to which a little group of earnest and brilliant Oxford men set themselves.

The starting point of the movement was a man who possessed in himself few of the natural gifts of an aggressive partisan leader. John Keble is chiefly remembered as a devotional poet, who gave expression in his verse with a delicate felicity not only to the sentimental side of Anglican ritualism, but to that whole quietistic ideal of the traditionally "Christian" virtues which did much to give its moral appeal to the new movement. In his own character Keble was a compound of Christian saintliness, and of an implacable intolerance toward whatever lies outside the range of Anglican theology. A second and more aggressive leading spirit is Hurrell Froude, a devoted friend and follower of Keble. Froude died too early to make it possible to assign him his intellectual rank; his *Remains*, published as a campaign document, raised a considerable furor, but less from positive qualities of excellence than from their outspoken censure of the heroes of the Protestant Reformation.

It was Froude who was responsible for bringing into the movement the one leader whose abilities are clearly of the first order—John Henry Newman. The method which after deliberation was adopted for carrying on the propaganda was the publication of a series of small pamphlets—the famous *Tracts for the Times*. In 1835 the Tractarian group received an important accession in Edward Bouverie Pusey. Pusey was an older man, with high family connections, a reputation for learning in certain abstruse fields, an ability to believe with perfect conviction what he desired to believe, and much piety of the obvious sort. He added therefore great prestige to the party, and when later on the exodus to Rome took place he was influential in anchoring the bulk of the Tractarians to the Anglican communion.

4. The interest of the Oxford Movement at the present day centers almost wholly about the intellectual history of Newman. At the start he was of course a firm believer in the Church of England. But now for him who holds that the Church is the authoritative interpreter of God on earth, there is one awkward question: which of the numerous churches that exist, each claiming alone to possess the truth, is in reality divinely authorized? Newman felt no difficulty about the Protestant denominations; by substituting private judgment for authoritative ecclesiastical utterances, they seem clearly to be out of the running. But with the Roman Church it is different. If one is looking about for the natural marks of a representative of God on earth, he can hardly fail to recognize the eminent claims of Catholicism. Its universal character, its continuous existence, its comparative stability of doctrine, its impressive organization and ritual, all are things which a man, if he is asking for an agency to do his religious thinking for him, will naturally find congenial. Newman could not avoid seeing this; and his development records the way in which he came to realize that his logical place was not in the Church of England, but in the Church of Rome.

5. As a philosopher Newman's creed starts from the repudiation of rationalism in the interests of religious faith. Rationalism, as he defines it, is the disposition to demand the "how" and "why" of a doctrine before we are willing to accept it; faith, on the other hand, is the acceptance of what one's reason cannot reach simply upon testimony, the "assenting to a doctrine as true which we do not see, which we cannot prove, because God says it is true." Before turning to the justification which he attempts to give to this attitude, it is worth while noting its source in his own personal temperament. "The happiest state," he once remarks, "is not that of commanding or directing, but of obeying solely, not having to choose for oneself." There is for Newman always something good in obedience as such, just as there is something essentially wicked in self-assertion, independently of what may turn out to be its results. The very principle of sin is insubordination. Reverence for the old paths is a chief Christian virtue; curiosity, as the expression of an active and independent spirit, is man's first and great snare. The love of order is so sacred a principle that it finds expression in the nature of God himself; "God voluntarily made promises and put himself under engagements, from its being of his very nature to love order and rule and subordination for their own sake." Whatever comes to us hallowed by the past has a claim upon us simply as custom, irrespective of any further claim. Instead of the Churchman endeavoring to recommend his position in a round-about way, "how much better and more honest to avow that it is our duty to stand by what is established till it is proved to be wrong, and to maintain customs which we have inherited, *though it would have been our duty to resist them before they were received.*" So in the practice of the moral life, Newman's maxim is always to be on the safe side; this is one motive back of his constant leaning toward asceticism. "The Christian dares not walk on the edge of a precipice; instead of going to



the extreme of what is allowable, he keeps at a distance from evil that he may be safe."

6. With this temperamental bias as a starting point, what Newman as a philosopher is called upon to do is to refute the rationalistic principle that our belief should always be proportional to the evidence, and to show the right of a man to believe beyond, and even in opposition to, reason or logic. And he proceeds on the basis of two main distinctions. The first is the distinction between what he calls *real* and *notional* assent. Here as he defines it the difference is, that real assent is always to the concrete, to the individual, to what can be presented to the senses or the imagination, whereas notional assent is only to abstractions—the creations in a way of our own minds. The important point for Newman, however, goes a little deeper; at bottom real assent is that which takes hold of us vitally, which stirs our emotions and prompts to conduct, which is directed not simply to the true, but to the beautiful, the useful, the admirable and heroic, to objects that kindle devotion, rouse the passions, and attach the affections—a result which involves more than the mere presence of a concrete image, though sense and imagination supply normally the sort of object most congenial to our emotional and moral nature. And the application lies in recognizing that religion—as distinct from theology—is always a case of such real assent.

A second distinction—and this leads to the main point of Newman's argument—is that between assent and *inference*. Assent, he holds, as a state of untroubled, undoubting acquiescence, is an act of mind *sui generis*, to be sharply distinguished from that merely conditional acceptance which goes by the name of inference, or reason, or logic. It follows that there is no such thing as degrees of assent, supposed to be proportioned to degrees of evidence. When I assent doubtfully, I do not assent at all, or, rather, what I do is to assent absolutely to the doubtfulness of the proposition; variations of as-

sent are in reality only assents to a variation in inferences. And back of this closing of the mind with truth which assent presupposes, there is no more ultimate test. The feeling of satisfaction, of intellectual security, the sense of success, attainment, finality, is the last word in the matter; we have no right to say that it must come in this way or in that, but can only scrutinize experience to discover how actually it does come. Now however it comes, it is not explainable by inference as such, because it is always unconditional, whereas inference is conditional. Inference fails at both ends; it leads only to notional truths, to probabilities that stop short of the concrete reality with which alone our nature is satisfied; and it depends on the prior acceptance of general principles which also are notional, and about which men may and do widely disagree. In real assent inference plays a part, but a very minor part. What we call assent is, rather, a concrete, personal, unanalyzable act, the reaction of our total constitution to a complex of probabilities arising out of the circumstances of the particular case. To this reaction Newman gives the name of the *Illative Sense*—a name useful perhaps for identifying the fact, provided it does not lead us to suppose that we are dealing with a peculiar mental faculty to whose simplicity, rather than to the subtlety and complexity of the situation, the difficulty of analysis is due.

The general drift of Newman's argument is, then, that the primary sources of assent are not logical, but go back rather to our emotional and practical nature. "Logic," he writes, "makes but a sorry rhetoric with the multitude; first shoot round corners, and you may not despair of converting by a syllogism." What the everyday man is after is reality, not consistency; whereas logicians are more set upon concluding rightly than on right conclusions. Life is not long enough for a religion of inferences; we shall never have done beginning if we determine to begin with proof. The true method of reasoning does not depend on logical abstractions, but is

carried out into the realities of life, "its premises being instinct with the substance and the momentum of that mass of probabilities which, acting on each other in correction and confirmation, carry home definitely to the individual case." Our conclusion must be no smart antithesis which may look well on paper, but the living action of the mind on a great problem of fact. Truth is thus attainable, but its rays stream in upon us through the medium of our moral as well as of our intellectual being.

7. There is obvious truth in Newman's reading of the human mind, though it is a truth very easily capable of being turned to questionable uses. The fact is that all men do bring to their judgments in particular a mass of prepossessions which color and shape the issue. This is something from which we cannot get away if we would; but it is far from immaterial what attitude we take with reference to it. The attitude to which Newman's own fondness for authority leads him is one of pious acquiescence in the presence of his temperamental leanings. Instead of viewing these impartially and critically, and thus giving them the chance to reveal their own possible shortcomings, he seeks instead to encourage and strengthen them in every way, to protect them from rivalry, to force each new fact into their mold without allowing it to take its own course and suggest its natural conclusion. This doubtless is what men are as a matter of fact tempted to do; but it is the essential aim of liberalism to help them overcome this temptation, and form the habit of realizing to themselves sympathetically points of view other than those most congenial to their natural minds.

8. Put briefly, the application of this theory of belief to Newman's positive outcome starts from two great persuasions—the reality of God, and the universal fact of human sin and misery. The first comes primarily from the experience of conscience. For Newman the feelings of obligation, and of remorse and guilt when conscience is violated, are inexplicable

unless they point to a personal being with whom man stands in immediate relations of obedience and devotion. They do this not by inference and abstract reasoning, but directly as a matter of "real assent"; just as on the human plane the shapes and colors that represent my neighbor's body lead me by an instinctive insight to the individual soul behind them. The second great fact is that man, by the testimony of all history, is clearly in apostasy from God, and so, for the time being, cast off from his presence. And the two facts together create the presumption which Newman brings to his interpretation of religious history, the presumption that nothing but supernatural interference and an infallible authority—since reason has been tried and palpably has broken down—can remedy the disaster. If therefore we find an institution possessing the actual marks which our presumption would lead us to look for, we can accept its claims without hesitation. The basis of this confidence is frankly pragmatic; the Catholic religion is true because its objects control and influence conduct as nothing else does, because it has about it an "odor of truth and sanctity *sui generis*, as perceptible to my moral nature as flowers to my sense, such as can come only from Heaven." But then all real assent is pragmatic. Meanwhile the inability of reason to grasp the full content of revelation is no ground for giving up our certainty of its truth, because our assent is directed not primarily to the abstract propositions, but to the truthfulness of the revealer; and there is no more need that it should be affected by the inability of the mind to take in the revelation completely, than it is necessary that a boy who cannot make his answer to a mathematical problem tally with the book should at once distrust the book.

It may be remarked in passing that Newman's argument, whatever its force, is hardly sufficient to justify his own particular preference for an external authority in religion. It is true that in matters of great moment we wish to give our assent wholeheartedly and confidently. Religion is not a weigh-

ing of probabilities; it is, or ought to be, a sincere and unhesitating faith. But Newman himself has pointed out a way to ground this without the need for resorting to an infallible guide. If belief rests in the end upon the sort of person the believer is, there is no need that normally it should be hesitating and feeble. If it shows itself unstable, the cause lies not so much in a deficiency of reason, as in a deficiency in ourselves; there is not in us the solidity of aim and of inner temper sufficient to steady belief, and our uncertainty therefore would equally show itself toward the claims of authority. True, certainty does not mean infallibility. It is only that for the needs of the time being we are convinced, not that we have any absolute assurance that this conviction is unshakable in the future. But as Newman also has himself remarked, such an abstract possibility of mistake is no real drawback to the strength of present assent, since this last depends not on logic, but on grounds more deeply seated in our constitution. Newman's endeavor to construct a theory of certitude which shall raise belief in Catholic truth above all other persuasions, as something to which we not only assent wholeheartedly, but know to be unshakable and final truth, is a total failure; it breaks down before the plain fact that the persuasion of certitude many times in human life is overthrown by growing experience, so that in no case can its presence serve as a conclusive test.

9. One further point in Newman's doctrine has a significance for philosophy. In the course of his drift towards Catholicism he had felt more and more the need of providing for a growing rather than a closed revelation, in order to obviate the objection, urged by Protestants, that the Church has added to, and so corrupted, the truth of the Gospel. Now the fundamental issue here may be separated from its ecclesiastical setting. If anyone believes that mankind is on the road to truth, he seems bound to recognize as a test something in the nature of an objective historical process. He must in other words

admit that it is not any private man's judgment, but the developing experience of mankind, the collective wisdom of the race, the issue of great movements of human thought attested by their permanent and settled satisfactoriness, which *in the end* has to be depended on to winnow out falsehood and uncertainty. And Newman in his doctrine of Development is trying to bring this, the historical test, to the support of Catholic claims. The obvious remark to be made about his attempt is, not that the test is wholly inapplicable, but that he is trying to apply it prematurely and narrowly. Thus he has in the first place to assume that historical development is always by way of addition, and never of reversal; if it can be shown that the Church has even once in its long history been inconsistent with itself, or with the original revelation, he admits that he has lost his case. Of course his way is smoothed here for him by his rather easy-going theory of evidence, and his initial assumption, based on large moral and spiritual grounds rather than on the facts, of the extreme improbability that inconsistencies will be found in an institution already recognized as divine; for he makes it very plain that he does not consider any evidence sufficiently "positive and distinct" to prove an inconsistency, so long as it is possible by any hypothesis, however strained, to bring it into line with his pre-suppositions. If one happens not to start with this same assumption, Newman's treatment of difficulties is thus very likely to impress him as a resort to special pleading. "It stands to reason," Newman writes for example, in defending the supposed discovery of the true cross, "which of two parties is the more likely to be right on a question of topographical fact—men who lived three hundred years after, and on the spot, or those who lived at a distance of a thousand, and at the Antipodes"; the value of the whole apparatus of modern scientific criticism is thus swept aside with a word. And, in the second place, Newman really plays fast and loose with the historical argument when he refuses to direct his gaze beyond the field

wherein his own favorite beliefs are found to rule. The history of Mankind he expressly limits to the brief and partial course of civilization that has culminated in modern Europe; and even in Europe the history of Protestant countries is set aside as irrelevant.

10. One other philosopher of real attainments is to be found among the Tractarians—William George Ward. Ward is next to Newman the most interesting figure in the Movement; he combines great mental sincerity and frankness with logical acuteness of a high order, and with a bluff spontaneity, and a zest for the human and the secular, which contrasts refreshingly with the thinness and occasional acerbity of the sacerdotal temper. Ward admitted freely that he did not himself possess the gift of saintliness. This however did not prevent him from admiring and reverencing with a peculiar intensity the austerity of the ascetic and saintly character; and it was the absence of any provision for this in the Anglican church which turned his eyes to Rome. His *Ideal of a Christian Church* is a powerful indictment of the smugness and self-complacency of the English system, the absence in it of any adequate means of moral or spiritual discipline, the subservience to rank and wealth, and, in general, the “heavy, unspiritual, unelastic, prosaic, unfeeling, unmeaning Protestant spirit”; and he argued that only by learning from Rome, where the claims of holiness, humility, unworldliness, and mystic contemplation were recognized and provided for, could England hope to save her soul. The book proved one of the turning points in the history of the movement; it helped to force the hands of Newman, and to precipitate the great secession, Ward himself being among the first to go.

Philosophically Ward's defence of authority follows much the lines of Newman, with perhaps a greater relative emphasis on the way in which belief is dependent on a practical life of devotion and obedience. Since it is conscience rather than reason which brings men into contact with the realities of re-

ligion, it is absurd to suppose that the right way to investigate religion is to give up its practice for an attitude of rational impartiality, and so turn it provisionally into a matter of sceptical doubt; this would be as if one were to shut his eyes that he might do full justice to arguments intended to convince him that a tree within ten yards of him does not really exist there. Ward also comes into contact with the secular currents of English philosophy, in connection with a long continued critical attack upon the underlying principles of the sensationalists, more particularly of J. S. Mill. Here his general thesis is, that the foundations of a Catholic philosophy are already admitted in our necessary acceptance of certain truths on the basis of an unproved intuition; and along this line he criticizes acutely Mill's attempt to find a purely empirical source for truths such as those of mathematics and of causal law. That on which Ward more particularly rests his case, as at once simple and conclusive, is the fact of memory. Unless we accept the pronouncement of memory as to the reality, not merely of the present impression about a past event, but of the actual existence of that event in the past, we are incapable of taking a single step in the way of reasoning; and this conviction has absolutely no warrant from "experience"—which can only become experience by taking it for granted,—or from anything save the self-evidence of its own claim. It of course follows that for Ward moral truths also are the products of this gift of intuition—a thesis which he uses effectively to overthrow the theological doctrine that they are established by the arbitrary will of God.

§ 2. *Liberalism in Theology. Coleridge. Maurice.*  
*Matthew Arnold*

1. While Tractarianism in its later history was tending more and more to become a matter of ecclesiastical politics rather than of ideas, another form of religious philosophy was



extending its influence with permanent effects on the reconstruction of Christian doctrine. For one important source of this new tendency, it is necessary to turn back to certain aspects of the romantic movement at the beginning of the century. It has appeared that, according to the traditional theory accredited to Locke, and adopted by the associationists generally, the mind is originally a sheet of white paper. On its various occurrences in the outer world impress themselves, leaving this or that particular sensation or idea, by the combination of which sensations into complex objects all the content of knowledge arises; to understand the soul and its life, therefore, is to conduct an analysis of it into its primitive constituents. Long before this ceased to be the dominant principle of psychological science, its deficiencies were expressed with great force and vividness by the poet Wordsworth. For Wordsworth, man is no complex of atomic sensations, but a unitary and living soul, capable of reaching out far beyond the meagre results of analytical and logical reasoning, guided by warm feeling, and seeking for beauty and significance rather than for mere scientific law and classified fact. On this new psychological basis Wordsworth had rested a philosophy of nature as well, sharply opposed to the current creed. The world of nature is not an intricate piece of mechanism. Its true reality is spiritual; and with this spirit man may commune with immediate sympathy and delight, and in so communing may grow in wisdom through a process of unconscious receptiveness far surer and more expeditious than science can insure.

2. The influence which Wordsworth exerted over the thought of the nineteenth century, though very considerable, is for the most part too indirect and pervasive to be traced with much precision. In the case of Wordsworth's friend Coleridge a much more visible line of influence is discernible. Coleridge's philosophy, in its most general terms, may be defined as an attempt to put life into the dry bones of the

political, religious, and literary orthodoxy of his day, to internalize accepted truth, and translate it back into the personal experience out of which it arose. Here for example is a religious doctrine—say the doctrine of the Atonement. The common theologian regarded it as a statement of events that took place in the courts of heaven, a legal transaction between the persons of the Trinity; for Coleridge, to be worth holding at all, it must symbolize rather some vital fact in a man's own inner life. The ground for the prevalent narrow and arid conception of religion Coleridge found in particular in wrong conceptions of the Bible; and perhaps the most important single thing in his religious teaching was his protest against the bibliolatry of the popular religion—the theory of a “superhuman Ventriloquist,”—and his influence in getting a hearing for a less magical theory of inspiration. For Coleridge, the test of truth is not authority or miracle, but the ability to *find* men, and affect their conduct and emotions.

The tool which Coleridge brought to the task of reconstructing theology was the transcendental philosophy of Germany; though probably even before he became acquainted with this, his mind was set in very much the same direction under the influence of Platonizing thought. His philosophy was never worked out systematically, and it is possible that the loss is not a great one; Coleridge's power lies in flashes of concrete insight rather than in connected reasoning. The one chief point on which his treatment turns is the distinction between two levels of the intellectual life—the Understanding, and the Reason. By Understanding, Coleridge means roughly the processes of scientific generalization, where we start with particular facts, and then go on to systematize them by comparing and combining. For Coleridge, however, there is another and higher type of knowledge, though of the exact nature of this, as a matter of technical philosophy, he is not successful in giving a very lucid account. Reason is in the first place held to be constituted by ultimate principles of our rational nature,

which are necessary for making even the facts of the understanding really intelligible. These cannot come from the senses; "the solution of phenomena can never be derived from phenomena." Since they are what we bring to the understanding of the world, in the nature of the case they are ultimate and underivable, else we should have the "absurdity of demanding proof for the very facts which constitute the nature of him who demands it." But now also there is another way of looking at the distinction which has no specially self-evident connection with the metaphysical account. This is essentially identical with Wordsworth's teaching, and may be described not inaccurately in terms of the common distinction between knowledge, and wisdom. Wisdom in this sense has to do not merely with seeing things as a whole from some central point of view; this central standpoint is preeminently a matter of *valuation*. "My opinion is this," Coleridge writes to his friend Thomas Poole, "that deep thinking is attainable only by a man of deep feeling, and that all truth is a species of revelation." The true end of philosophy is to "make the reason spread light over the feelings, and to make our feelings, with their vital warmth, actualize our reason." The special metaphysical ground for this he finds in the adoption of the Kantian or Fichtean doctrine of the supremacy of the Moral Reason. The highest Reason is not a fact of knowledge, but a form of living. "The practical Reason alone therefore *is* Reason in the full and substantive sense; the Theoretic Reason as the ground of the Universal and Absolute in all logical *Conclusions* is rather the *Light* of Reason in the *Understanding*."

About the final philosophical implications of this theory of knowledge Coleridge professes himself not very vitally concerned. What he insists upon is the validity of the rational principles which we bring to the interpretation of the world, and their practical subordination to the moral insight; whether now the ultimate ideals of Reason are to be regarded as regulative only—as mere functions of the mind,—or as con-

stitutive and actual, one in essence with the power and life of nature, as Plato teaches, he conceives is of living interest only to the philosopher by profession. Personally he ranges himself on the side of the Platonists; Reason in man he conceives to be the true revelation of a Living Power which, as self-conscious will and intelligence, meets man face to face in nature, and communes with the spiritual principle in him. One may have a grounded faith in religion without this speculative justification; but it has its religious value nevertheless. And in particular it becomes a matter of direct importance on the negative side, as a weapon against a competing philosophy. In his attack upon the mechanistic doctrines of science, the practical and speculative interests join hands. To Coleridge, as a protagonist of spirit and the ideal, Hartley's mechanical conception of a world "left a lifeless Machine whirled about by the dust of its own Grinding" seems in self-evident opposition to all the genuine demands of the soul. The universe, if science is the last word, is like a "string of blind men each holding to the skirt of the man before him reaching far out of sight, but all moving on without the least deviation in one straight line. It would be naturally taken for granted that there was a guide at the head of the file; what if it were answered—No! sir, the men are without number, and infinite blindness supplies the place of sight?"

3. The practical bearing of Coleridge's philosophy, as issuing in particular in that spirit of historical reverence which lies close to the center of the Coleridgian point of view, and which is characteristic of its later theological developments, comes to light most conspicuously in his political theory. The radicals in their desire for reform had fixed their eyes too exclusively, he thought, on the defects of existing conditions. But society cannot thrive on criticism alone; it must have positive bonds of union. And these bonds for the mass of men are historically founded. There is need for the cultivation of an inner spirit of loyalty and social feeling if society is to

hang together; and this is the product necessarily of concrete social conditions. In making a wholesale attack upon the past, the reformers were unconsciously cutting the ground from underneath the realization of their own professed ideals; their work of criticism needs to be supplemented by a more positive interpretation of the real values embodied in the past. It was not that Coleridge was satisfied with the existing state of England. But he thought the trouble was not that institutions were bad, but that the ideas originally underlying them had been forgotten. Instead of rejecting them, therefore, with all their possibilities of effectiveness through their hold on the mass of men, the true method of reform is, by a renewed insight into the inner spirit of the institution, to revive the significance for human life which it must originally have had. Instead of beginning in political science with abstract principles of reason, the true starting point is the philosophic *idea*, or purpose, to which concrete institutions give expression. The truth of this is proved progressively by its success in throwing light upon the actual facts; while also it supplies an immanent principle of criticism for testing and getting rid of whatever thwarts the underlying purpose, and so makes progress possible. And there is of course much sound philosophy here. Two things it sets itself against—the supremacy of unthinking habit and prejudice, and the supremacy of undisciplined feelings; it demands in both cases the addition of a third essential—enlightened insight. To those who acquiesce even in good custom, Coleridge brings the demand that also we should discover the rational ground of our acquiescence; radicalism and Jacobinism, on the other hand, seemed to him equally, though in a very different way, to be dispensing with reason, and to call urgently for “law and light,” as against the dominance of shapeless feelings, sentiments and impulses. To “hurrying enlighteners” and “revolutionary amputators” he presents the rational claims of the gradual processes of nature, and the “historical spirit.”

There are, however, distinct possibilities of danger in the type of political philosophy which Coleridge recommends. The discovery that institutions are *intelligible*, when we had only been in the habit of regarding them either as authoritative, or as objectionable, is very likely, in the man of speculative interests, to give them a new and peculiar hold upon the mind, which may easily come to compete with another standard. This is the Benthamite standard which tests institutions by the concrete practical effects we can trace on the everyday happiness of ourselves and other human beings, as against the larger, more intellectual, more abstract and grandiose test of conformity to some ideal type which history, or theory, has implanted in our minds. In this way it is very possible that the philosopher of society may become too tender of the "idea"—the theoretical justification of the institution in terms of its abstract speculative merits, or its historical and cultural associations—in comparison with concrete wrongs that individuals may be suffering. The task of emphasizing the good points of the *status quo* is one that needs doing, and it may be regarded as fortunate that there are those who find it congenial; but it is a drawback that it seems so often to require a belief in the intellectual finality of the products of the past, which one has only to live a sufficient number of years to find disproved by the course of events. It is significant that in most of the changes which Coleridge himself opposed, in the full confidence that he was doing God and philosophy service, history has already decided against him.

4. Both the strength and the weakness of Coleridge's philosophy are exemplified in a group of theologians who were instrumental in bringing it to bear upon English religious thought, and of whom Frederick Denison Maurice is the most important. It is natural that the religious innovator should show a tenderness for familiar forms of belief and worship, and should prefer wherever possible to keep his new wine in old bottles. But the consequence of this is seldom

favorable to the integrity of the intellectual life. Take as an example Coleridge's attitude toward the doctrine of the Trinity. Coleridge held it greatly important that we refuse to give up this doctrine; it would, he thought, be a fatal sacrifice of high spiritual truth. And what now is this truth when it is reduced to philosophical form? "My faith," says Coleridge, "is this:—God is the Absolute Will; it is his Name and the meaning of it. It is the Hypostasis. As begetting his own Alterity, the Jehovah, the Manifested, he is the Father; but the Love and the Life—the Spirit—proceeds from both." It is difficult not to suspect that Coleridge is yielding here to the temptation to allow the play of the metaphysical fancy to delude him into thinking he has discovered sound reason for holding to a belief whose real force lies only in its familiar associations. And the intellectual cloudiness which this will surely beget nowhere shows itself so conspicuously in alliance with real ability as in Maurice.

Maurice was one of the influential personalities of his day. He managed to convey to many impressionable natures a peculiar sense of profundity and spiritual insight; and something of this he did undoubtedly possess. But with the best will to give Maurice his due, it is impossible to deny that he is often very provoking. One reads page after page marked by impressive earnestness, a sense of fateful issues, a high ethical purpose, only at the end to find himself asking in some perplexity just what it is all about. Such is the contumelious spirit of average mankind, that this difficulty in shaping a clear-cut and unambiguous issue ends by weakening interest in the prophet's message. What at bottom Maurice was trying to express is after all, apparently, not very difficult to understand. In the large he wants to maintain that religion is a life, rather than a matter either of historical or of logical evidence; and a life having its source in a Power not ourselves making for peace and happiness. Truth is not a prisoner at the bar awaiting with some apprehension our

human verdict; it is the great soul of the universe which envelops us and puts forth its fruits through us. It is something which is positive, not negative; which we should aim to embrace in its fulness rather than try to pare down to a minimum; which does not wait on reasoned proof and critical weighing of evidence, but makes its immediate impression on the heart and conscience. Faith is not, as Protestant theologians had tended to regard it, the ground of our salvation, as if it were a constitutive power and made the thing to be. It is a mere power of recognition, and points to a foregone reality; the real center of religion is a Living Being whom to know is life. Or as a disciple of Maurice puts it, "*Our* grasp of the thought can never be worth much; it is the grasp of the Truth upon us that men are willing to die for."

But Maurice begins at once to make trouble for himself. In the legitimate desire to give to truth an objective and historical backing, he chose, as Newman did, to take the stand that tradition has in its favor every material presumption; and he will never therefore, if he can help it, let new truth shape its own form and expression. And the reasons which he has for this attitude are not without force. Belief in fixed articles, Maurice argues, enables me to believe the world is progressive, not stationary. If after nearly six thousand years we assume nothing is known about questions of most concern, we shall not expect that anything will be known. The best way to advance in truth is, then, not to regard with a suspicious eye all past attainment, and refuse to utilize it until it has produced its full credentials; we must first accept it in the large before we can build upon it, and so appreciate the real force of its evidence. Any other course is to make a stumbling block out of what ought to be a spiritual help. The answer to this however is the same as in Newman's case; whatever presumption there is in general that mankind has attained to truth, the identification of the results of the education of humanity with the Anglican formularies is too hasty. And the



insistence that always we should find a home for every aspect of truth within the sacred phraseology sanctioned by the Church is bound to lead to just the result Maurice deprecates—subtle casuistries, unprofitable disputes about the meaning of words, an emphasis on the letter before we are free to emphasize the spirit. For the controversial mind this issues in all sorts of makeshifts not stopping short of intellectual dishonesty; Maurice is not himself a controversialist, but the outcome in his case is perhaps even more dangerous in its ultimate tendency. It leads him, that is, to deprecate any disposition to put the issue sharply, or to allow the mind to range beyond what makes for religious edification. It is this dislike of facing issues, rather than any unavoidable obscurity in his own positive beliefs, that is responsible for Maurice's pervading cloudiness. Thus his own views were strongly in the direction of the new and freer conception of the Scriptures. But instead of coming to the aid of Colenso, he takes the side of his enemies, not because Colenso's criticisms are mistaken, but because the moral lessons of the Bible are so greatly more important than questions of literal accuracy, that doubts about the latter ought to be kept as much as possible in the background. A remark of Maurice's in this connection is a commentary on his position; the subject of inspiration, he says, is one "for prayer, not for definition." People who like to start with definitions—who like, that is, to know approximately what they are talking about—will not find this acceptable.

The ineffectualness to which such a temper of mind will lead is illustrated again in Maurice's social interests. Maurice may be regarded as the founder of Christian Socialism; it was he who gave it its name, intending this, as he says, to commit the movement to a conflict "with the unsocial Christians and the unchristian Socialists." Here his peculiarity of mind shows in the tendency to think that if he can identify, in some complex existing institution, any point of community with an ab-

stract spiritual ideal, he forthwith has justified its right to continued existence. Thus aristocracy must have its place in the state, because there is needed a witness to the lordship of the spirit over the flesh. The sovereignty of the people, on the other hand, he repudiates as at once the "silliest and most blasphemous of all contradictions"; and the reason is that all sovereignty is by grace of God. How far removed from a comprehension of the real political and industrial situation such a mental attitude leaves Maurice and men like him, is not obscurely suggested by setting alongside its seething forces and complicated problems the list of benefits which he congratulated himself had been the outcome of Christian Socialism—Sunday a day of rest, intemperance checked, political agitation discouraged, and a number of workingmen led to see the folly and danger of strikes.

5. The intellectual instability which thus characterized most of the constructive religious thinking of the middle of the century, with its attempt to retain dogmas while emptying them of any content which the average churchman could lay his finger on with the certainty that he knew with what he was dealing, had several consequents, or sequents, which Maurice could not have contemplated with entire complacency. One of these was the disposition to set aside the reconstruction of theology altogether, and to occupy oneself with practical religion in the form of Christian service. A striking representative of this tendency is Charles Kingsley, himself a disciple of Maurice, and his co-worker in the field of Christian Socialism. Kingsley represents, very nearly at its best, the utilization of religious sentiment, and a rousing appeal to the better side of human nature, for the active work of the preacher of righteousness. Let us get enthusiastically together and do something for the glory of God, and matters of theory will look after themselves. But if one stops to think for a moment instead of being carried off his feet, he will perhaps

begin to wonder how much in the way of a doctrinal creed and ecclesiastical organization he is thus letting himself in for. A call to men to abandon unprofitable controversy, and to enlist under the banner of a great historic Church in the warfare for human good, is likely to forget that the Church is no mere ideal of fellowship, but a very concrete and definitely constituted social institution, and if any one *did* have a selfish interest in keeping its historic features unaltered, he could hardly hope for circumstances more favorable to his aims than that men generally should eschew the exercise of the critical intellect, and throw themselves without reserve into schemes of practical philanthropy under its leadership.

6. A different form, much simpler than that adopted by Maurice, of the attempt to make religion a life and not a system, may likewise be used to cover up the extent of the break from orthodox Christianity. This is to retain, not the church, nor the creed, nor the Bible, but the historical Jesus as the central object and practical source of authority in religion. This very indefinite theory of authority as located in the moral personality of Christ became an issue in the sixties in connection with the publication of an anonymous volume—its author was Professor John R. Seeley—which for a time was the subject of much discussion and much vituperation; Lord Shaftesbury, for example, the recognized leader of the Evangelicals, speaks of it rather excitedly as the “most pestilential book ever vomited from the jaws of hell.” *Ecce Homo* is an attempt at an historical reconstruction of primitive Christianity, under the guidance of moral preferences rather than of a critical apparatus; its interest is to set before us the human side of Jesus, leaving the validity of dogmatic religion discreetly in the background. The same lack of sharp definition characterizes Seeley’s later book on *Natural Religion*. Natural religion—the worship, that is, or enthusiastic contemplation, of whatever in the known universe appears worthy

of worship—is and is not sufficient; it is the one essential and necessary thing in religion, while it still must not be understood as at all denying the worth of a supernatural revelation.

7. Meanwhile the tenuous and uncertain character which theology was coming to take on under the influence of liberalism was not without its effect in a more practical direction. It need not prove surprising if, especially in the case of men actively engaged in administering the machinery of the Church, a spirit of opportunism were to be encouraged by the increasing fluidity of doctrine. The best illustration of this last tendency is to be found in Benjamin Jowett, the celebrated Master of Balliol, and a powerful force in the ranks of liberalism. One of the striking features of Jowett's mind is his conscious justification of such an opportunism, as against what he considers an unhealthy scrupulosity. Here is an institution existing with immense power in the community for valuable ends; who is to have the direction of the forces which it embodies? Shall we allow petty scruples to throw power into the hands of those who will use it against reason and freedom, or shall we waive questions of technical honesty, and accomplish good by accepting conditions as they stand? Jowett's answer is made easier by his personal temperament. His mind is a good deal of the type of Doctor Johnson's, for whom he had a great admiration; "common sense" is his final court of appeal. This is the outcome of his long wrestle with philosophy—the conclusion that metaphysics really have no standing. "Common sense may receive a slight enlargement from them, and indeed some knowledge of them is necessary to enable the mind to get rid of them. But I think the vulgar are right in regarding them as a forbidden kind of knowledge which is of most use after it has been forgotten."

But now common sense often means, in practice, that on which the great majority are agreed; and accordingly we find Jowett using this consciously as his test in matters of conduct as well. In this way conformity is turned into something

like an ideal good; "singularity is of itself an evil." Too much enthusiasm is of doubtful benefit; unworldliness a positive vice. One of the great truths of religion is "resignation to the general fact of the world and of life"; and under title of "the world," Jowett clearly covers something of what the religious mind is wont to call the "worldly." It follows that we may easily be over-conscientious; a tender conscience is a "conscience unequal to the struggles of life." If we find ourselves with scruples and would resolve them, Jowett advises us not to depend too much upon our own judgment, but to look about us and see if respectable people generally are troubled about the thing; if not, we are only making ourselves "singular" by raising the question. And for common sense there is a further test—success. If we are not recognized by the world there must be something lacking in us, when only that is good which is generally recognized as good. "I was much more pleased with him than I expected to be," Jowett writes of a man he had recently met, "having, you know, a general prejudice against all persons who do not succeed in the world." Backed by this philosophy, Jowett has no great difficulty in reconciling himself to the situation in the English Church. It was not indeed quite an atmosphere of frankness and openness; but influence is worth a sacrifice. And if one needs further justification, it is comforting to reflect that one does not stand alone. Free-thinkers are not more nearly touched than high Churchmen, or than the Evangelicals by the Baptismal Service; "though I dislike Subscription, I am inclined to think that if we are all dishonest together, that proves us to be all honest together."

8. While the defenders of ecclesiasticism on the one hand, and of a Coleridgian spiritualism on the other, were each trying to shape Anglican thought, the older and simpler type of rationalistic or semi-rationalistic liberalism was never without its influence; and this influence, particularly in connection with the modification of views about inspiration and the Scriptures,

began in the latter part of the century to make rapid inroads upon traditional belief. The year 1860 saw the appearance of a coöperative volume entitled *Essays and Reviews*, which deserves mention as marking an epoch in the development of religious liberalism, not on account of any novelty in what it had to say, but because it was a move in the direction of breaking up the general conspiracy of evasiveness and timid silence about matters of scientific criticism long since taken for granted on the continent. Of the writers, three in particular gave other important assistance to the liberal cause, Jowett by scholarly contributions to the historical appreciation of New Testament theology, Baden Powell by an endeavor to rest religion on the acceptance of scientific law rather than on miracle, and Mark Pattison by numerous essays in which learning and an open mind are combined with literary skill of a high order.

Of somewhat more interest for philosophy is the appearance here and there of a spirit of rationalism which refused to remain within the boundaries even of a liberalized orthodoxy, and which issued in pure theism, or in a combination of moral fervor with theological agnosticism. An interesting representative of this tendency in the early part of the century is Blanco White. Brought up to become a priest in Catholic Spain, and sickened by contact with ecclesiastical corruption and superstition, he repudiated his vows at some personal risk and fled to England, where he became a force of importance in the current of free opinion that was beginning to stir at Oxford. White's intellectual history is a chequered one; but after passing from Catholicism to atheism, and thence to a moderate Anglicanism, he finally settled down as a Unitarian to a philosophical theism which repudiated authority of any sort, and reduced Christianity to an ideal of religious liberty, under acknowledgment of God as father, and of conscience as his voice. Another thinker of the same general temper is Francis W. Newman, a brother of Cardinal Newman. New-

man also sets aside the authority of creeds, of the Church, of the Bible, even of Christ; it is impossible to build a religion of authority upon free inquiry. God is left the central article of his creed; and the fruits of religion depend without any mediation whatever on the heart's belief in the sympathy of God with the individual man. White and Newman had a follower in Frances Power Cobbe, who was influenced also by the American Unitarian leader, Theodore Parker. In Parker, and in his friend William Henry Channing, a similar form of rationalistic theism is to be found, Parker being rather the more radical of the two.

9. Two other names may be noticed most conveniently in this connection; both made their mark as men of letters rather than as theologians, but their early days were spent in the atmosphere of religious controversy, and both contributed to the literature of theological unrest. James Anthony Froude, the historian, was a brother of Hurrell Froude, and had himself been implicated for a time in the Tractarian Movement; but he soon left it far behind. His *Nemesis of Faith* is a novel intended to show the danger of tying up religion to theological dogma. Later on Froude adopted wholesale the moral transcendentalism of Carlyle, but succeeded in turning it into a rather commonplace apology for taking life much as we find it, and acquiescing in such social conventions as stand in good repute. What in Carlyle was an active moral call upon the possessor of preëminent gifts to serve his fellows, is in Froude hardly more than a worship of power as a synonym of success, and an impatience with the demands of the unsuccessful; while the Carlylese distaste for the critical intellect passes into a mere instinctive dislike of innovation.

10. In Matthew Arnold there is a far more genuine and permanent concern for the religious problem. Arnold indeed proved to be one of the most powerful of the influences that helped to shape the form of liberal religion outside the bounds of historical Christianity. As a poet he had already given

expression to the sentimental side of a decaying faith; though it is clear from the whole tenor of his mind, a mind profoundly conservative, and sensitive to æsthetic impressions from the heritage of the past, that the disappearance of familiar landmarks, rather than any deep attachment to the Christian belief as such, was the source of his melancholy. Consequently there is no occasion for surprise if in the prose writings which constitute his contributions to religious thought his mood should have changed completely, with no trace now visible of hesitation or regret.

The requirement which Arnold makes of religion is that it shall be a matter of first-hand, verifiable experience. The traditional creed of Christianity is not of this sort. It is the product partly of a materialized imagination suited to our crude personal hopes and fears, partly of metaphysical reasonings which not one man in a thousand can even follow intelligently, and which in any case have to do with matters totally incapable of proof. God as a moral and intelligent Governor of the universe, a magnified and non-natural man, is something to which we cannot possibly stand in any experienced relation. What then is there in religion which is the object of such an immediate experience? It is, says Arnold, the certainty that righteousness is the law alike of our own being, and of the world. We know this primarily because we actually find it true that moral conduct brings peace and happiness, whereas unrighteousness fails of its desired reward. But we also know that this is no mere subjective and personal fact, because we have continual evidence how little our happiness depends upon ourselves. In the first place we did not make ourselves; we did not bring it about that the sense of succeeding, going right, hitting the mark in conduct, should give satisfaction. And furthermore our performance is not wholly or even nearly wholly in our own power. Our conduct is capable of almost infinitely different degrees of force and energy, and this energy springs mysteriously from sources back



of our conscious and voluntary will. To put ourselves in line then with this law of the universe, to attain the sense of harmony with the universal order, is what religion calls finding God. For religious experience God is simply the fact, independent of metaphysical argument or of popular anthropomorphism, that there are fundamental ethical laws which rule our lives. God is the Power not ourselves that makes for righteousness, the stream of tendency by which all things strive to fulfil the law of their being. This may seem to be reducing religion to morality; in a sense it is, in so far as the content of religion goes. But there is a real difference in the way in which this content makes its appeal to us; religion is morality indeed, but morality heightened, enkindled, lit up by feeling—morality touched by emotion. The difference is better illustrated than defined. “‘Hold off from sensuality,’ says Cicero, ‘for if you have given yourself up to it you will find yourself unable to think of anything else.’ That is morality. ‘Blessed are the pure in heart,’ says Jesus Christ, ‘for they shall see God.’ This is religion. ‘We all want to live honestly, but cannot,’ says the Greek maxim maker. That is morality. ‘O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!’ says St. Paul. That is religion. ‘Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty,’ is morality; but, ‘My meat is to do the will of him who sent me, and to finish his work,’ is religion.”

## CHAPTER IV

### NATURALISM AND EVOLUTION

#### § 1. *Thomas Buckle. Darwin and Evolution*

1. Even while the prestige of John Stuart Mill was at its height, a new influence was already making itself felt in the currents of naturalistic thought in England—an influence only slightly felt by Mill himself—which was to change the whole direction and emphasis of the intellectual life. It did this most directly and permanently, of course, through bringing the notion of development to bear upon all the subjects of human inquiry; but also, in a more general way, the theory of evolution signalized a certain shift of interest from politics and social reform to the objective constitution of the world at large. Even before the vogue of evolution, a tendency is apparent here and there to turn directly to the impersonal truths of science as the liberator of the human spirit from the trammels of superstition. For minds in rebellion against current theological creeds, it is not difficult to understand how the notion that the world, and man's character and destiny as a portion of the world, are ruled by Law, might come to take on the aspect of a new and glorious revelation. The earlier expressions of this are unimportant for philosophy, and amount to little more than a glorification in one form or another of "necessity" as a great spiritual principle. If one wants an illustration of the almost fanatical enthusiasm which this idea of necessity is capable of arousing, he may turn to the pages of Robert Owen, the philanthropist and socialist. Owen is

obsessed with the notion that a belief in free-will is the grand source of all evil, and that such a belief has only to be eradicated to lay a secure foundation for the millenium. Nature gives to each man his necessary constitution, and society determines the particular form this is to take. Once recognize this, and straightway it will "effectually destroy all motives to individual pride and vanity." No one versed in the true knowledge of his nature will think more highly of himself than of any of his fellow men; selfishness therefore will at once disappear. And as we cannot take pride in ourselves, so we have no logical right to blame others for what they cannot help. Instead of the impossible attempt to combat crime and error by penalties, it will be recognized that society alone is responsible for the aberration of individuals; and since we are thus "at the mercy of society," all our efforts will go to the endeavor by proper social conditions to create a new human nature. The "various phases of insanity called religion," in particular, appear to Owen as among the chiefest sources of divisions among men. "Rejoice," he writes, "all ye who have so long desired to see the period arrive when all the human race shall become wise and good in habits: for this weapon of mighty power has been discovered! Its name is TRUTH. Its sharpness and brilliancy, now that it is, *for the first time*, unsheathed to open view, no mortal can withstand." A similarly exaggerated notion of the practical importance of a belief in necessitarianism appears in a more scientific setting in Charles Bray's *Philosophy of Necessity*, a well-meaning piece of dogmatism which trails off into a defence of phrenology, and a vague apotheosis of humanity and the social whole. A better known writer, though scarcely a safer philosopher, is Harriet Martineau, whose *Letters on the Law of Human Nature and Development* is a collection of the correspondence between herself and a Mr. Atkinson, wherein the two authors congratulate one another on their superior attainments, and commiserate a world not yet sufficiently en-

lightened to appreciate the great necessitarian truths of materialism and phrenology.

An application of this conception of necessary law, drawn from the sciences of physical observation, to human history on a large scale, is attempted with results more pretentious than successful in Thomas Buckle's famous *History of Civilization*. The influence of the notion, compounded in part of a faith in science, and in part of æsthetic sentiment, of a great, iron-bound, self-complete universe having no place in it for the free play of human will—a single scene "permeated by one glorious principle of universal and undeviating regularity,"—is in Buckle complicated by his disposition to look upon law as an actual compelling force lurking behind the facts, and bending to its will the feeble powers of man. Buckle was especially impressed by the revelations of statistical uniformity. That in a given period there are approximately the same number of suicides, or that the total number of marriages seems uninfluenced by the uncertainties of individual love-making, is in truth a curious and interesting phenomenon, whose explanation is not wholly on the surface. To Buckle, the explanation seemed to be in terms of the utter subordination of will to a sort of physical fate. The power of the larger law, he says in speaking of suicide, "is so irresistible, that neither the love of life, nor the fear of another world, can avail anything toward even checking its operation." The ultimate dependence of human progress on the physical environment, more particularly on the great factors of Climate, Food, Soil, and the General Aspect of Nature, is, accordingly, his primary thesis. One of the deductions from this is, that in a country subject to startling vicissitudes of nature a superstitious habit of mind is bound to be generated, while science and reason are the products of nature in a form more subdued and regular in its processes. So likewise, more indirectly, the development of reason is dependent on the other physical factors, through their influence on the accumulation

of wealth. But now once in existence, intellect tends more and more to subdue nature, and to bring about a growing preponderance of mental over physical laws. It is Buckle's special interest to show that in the more favored and progressive countries progress depends solely on intellect or science, and not on moral ideas, which last remain approximately constant. The advance of civilization thus varies directly with "scepticism," or the attitude of doubt and investigation, and inversely with "credulity." A similar but far less able essay at a deterministic history of civilization is John William Draper's *Intellectual Development of Europe*, a book containing a great mass of information, not always well understood by the writer, but negligible as a contribution to science.

2. It was Darwin's *Origin of Species* which opened up the possibility of a final triumph of science over religion, and the substitution of an all-embracing reign of impersonal law for supernatural agency, alike by the new prestige which it lent to the pretensions of the scientific intellect, and by the weapons it afforded in particular against the two main foundations of religious belief—the notion of design in nature, and the conception of man as a being possessed of a spiritual life with little or no point of contact with animal existence. The idea that species have arisen by a gradual process was of course not a novel one. Darwin's own grandfather had suggested it; and more recently it had formed the burden of a book called *Vestiges of Natural Creation*, written by a scientific amateur, Robert Chambers, which had been the object of much discussion on its appearance. A more important essay in the same direction, that of the Frenchman Lamarck, who had proposed to account for the development of species on the theory of effort exerted to satisfy organic appetencies, and the use and disuse of organs, had been before the scientific world for several decades. But while the more open-minded scientists were not unwilling to give the hypothesis a hearing, it was the general verdict that the case had not been proven.

Darwin was successful where Lamarck had failed, by his empirical evidence that in Natural Selection we have a *vera causa* capable of explaining at least a part of the effect. Just how great a part this particular agency plays in the process of evolution Darwin never fully convinced even himself. In the earliest edition of the *Origin of Species* he admits that it is in any case no complete explanation; and as time went on he was inclined to allow more for the possible importance of coöperating factors. He continued to believe however that as compared with these, natural selection held at least the first place.

3. The prejudice, at the start the overwhelming prejudice, which Darwin's theory had to meet, is of course to be explained chiefly by the consequences it was seen or thought to have, and in particular by the consequences for religion. Whether these consequences really follow from it is indeed a matter often and vigorously disputed in the immediately succeeding decades; but at first glance, at any rate, there appears good ground for the suspicion that it undermines, not revelation merely, but the whole belief in the existence of God as well, since the strongest and most popular argument for a God has always started from that evidence of design in the world, the organic world in particular, on which natural selection seemed to cast doubt. Darwin's own judgment was fluctuating. He started in with no prejudice against theism. As a young man he had indeed liked the idea of being a country clergyman, and had seriously considered entering the Church; and it is rather curious that the book which most influenced him in his early days was the one that did most to popularize the design argument. "I do not think," he says, "I hardly ever admired a book more than Paley's *Natural Theology*; I could almost formerly have said it by heart." Nor did he ever wholly free himself from the force of the impression which the world gives that, in view of the remarkable way it has turned out, it must bear some relation to intelligence and

meaning. Thus he speaks of the "extreme difficulty or rather impossibility of conceiving this immense and wonderful universe, including man with his capacity of looking far backwards and far into futurity, as the result of blind chance or necessity."

But with time this feeling, strong when he wrote the *Origin*, tended to become weaker. The more we give our attention to the details of the evolutionary process, rather than to its large general effects, the more it is apt to appear that the natural selection of fortuitous variations weakens seriously the force of the supposition that intelligent purpose is at work; "there seems to be no more design in the variability of organic beings and in the action of natural selection, than in the course in which the wind blows." Darwin himself appeals more than once to the case of the variations that have been utilized by man in artificial selection, as indicating a clear lack of intention; "it seems preposterous that a maker of a universe should care about the crop of a pigeon solely to please man's silly fancies." A further and more positive difficulty which had weight with him is the difficulty occasioned by the fact of evil. The success of natural selection depends upon the existence of an enormous amount of suffering; and to reconcile this with a good and benevolent purpose is at best an act of faith. To Darwin the difficulty was the more real, in that he was susceptible in a peculiar degree to pity for suffering and weakness. His sympathies were always easily aroused, as is witnessed, for example, by his youthful practice of first killing worms in salt water before impaling them on the hook, his gradual discontinuance of the sport of hunting of which he was passionately fond, his early inability to stay out hospital operations, his eager partisanship on the question of slavery, and the intensity of his loathing for the cruelty of certain vivisectioners. When therefore he looked to nature, he was not disposed to ignore the evidences of evil. And although he held strongly to a belief in the predominance of

the good, he found this more compatible with a theory which made pleasure the accompaniment of useful adaptations, so that it tends by the blind law of survival to become the rule of life, than with a more thoroughgoing and ultimate theodicy.

While accordingly Darwin is never quite ready to deny purpose outright, he is left with no satisfactory intellectual reasons for asserting it. To accept it as an active cause for phenomena in detail is to abandon scientific explanation, and nothing in the concrete situation seems to afford a necessity for this; while if one falls back on the general assumption that everything alike in the end may have been designed by God for the purpose which it actually serves, this amounts only to saying that everything is determined to be what it is. As for the emotional sense of a divine presence at certain exalted moments, Darwin confesses to have felt it at times, but it gradually left him with his growing lack of susceptibility to the emotional side of life. There still remains the vague complex of feeling and reason which shows itself in the dissatisfaction with the notion of an unmeaning universe. But—and this is Darwin's last word—here also evolution bids us halt, and the "horrid doubt always arises whether the convictions of man's mind, which has been developed from the mind of the lower animals, are of any value or at all trustworthy."

4. Meanwhile there is another problem, or set of problems, growing out of the theory of evolution, on which Darwin was bound to have something more definite to say. Evolution may seem to affect our estimate not of God only, but of man as well. For if man has developed from the brutes, can we still suppose him possessed of those distinctive qualities that have been held to constitute his peculiar dignity and rank in creation? Of such qualities there are two of chief importance—reason, and conscience. Man's mental powers, if indeed he possesses any not shared with the brutes, Darwin finds explainable by the influence of speech or language. Morality



also needs no generically new and human faculty. Briefly, it depends on two things in particular, the sympathetic instincts which man shares with the lower orders, and his greater intellectual power—helped out by language—which enables him to reflect upon past actions and their motives, approving some and disapproving others. The social instincts lead a man to take pleasure in the society of his fellows, to feel a certain amount of sympathy with them, and to perform various services in their behalf. Then when the mental faculties have become sufficiently developed to make comparison possible, images of past actions and motives, and a feeling of dissatisfaction such as always results from an unsatisfied instinct, arise in us when we perceive that this enduring and always present social instinct has yielded to some other, stronger at the time, but neither enduring in its nature, nor leaving behind a very vivid impression. Finally, the power of language being acquired so that the wishes of the community can be expressed, the common opinion of the way each member ought to act for the general good becomes in a paramount degree the guide to action, in the form of a desire for social approbation; and this is further reinforced by habit.

## § 2. *Herbert Spencer*

1. The conception of evolution which Darwin had been successful in making for the first time a real scientific issue in the biological realm had already taken on a more universal form, even before the *Origin of Species* was published, in the mind of Herbert Spencer, in whose Synthetic Philosophy we have much the most elaborate and thoroughgoing expression of nineteenth century naturalism. Spencer's naturalism is, in the main, a lineal descendent of the older English tradition; but it has, even apart from the modifications due to the notion of development, certain individual peculiarities. Most of these

have their source in Spencer's own intellectual and moral temper. In tracing his genealogy, Spencer calls attention to the spirit of non-conformism prominent in his ancestry; and this same fondness for opinions which set themselves against authority and custom was everywhere in evidence in his own character. And what most people hold in a verbal and innocuous way was with him a rule of action. He disapproved of funeral ceremonies, and refused therefore on principle to attend them. He did not believe in the display of a monarchical government, and would not even witness street parades connected with state functions. He felt a strong objection to academic degrees, which did not, after the usual fashion, cease when he had himself an opportunity to receive them. On his generally unresponsive habit of mind toward other people's ideas, and his unhesitating readiness to air his disagreement, his whole life is a commentary. His opinions—and he held opinions about everything—he was constitutionally incapable of keeping to himself; “whenever I see what seems to me an evil,” he writes a friend whom he is instructing in the proper way to bring up her children, “I cannot avoid trying to rectify it.” He had, an acquaintance remarks of him, a keener desire than most people to get others to carry out his views even on quite trivial subjects—how to light a fire, how to hang pictures, and the like; and his strong assurance of the inherent rightness of whatever he was personally convinced of, and of the importance to the world that everyone else should think the same way about it, was apt to lend a touch of intolerance to his attitude. Thus he refused to give his support to the new philosophical journal *Mind*, on the ground that it “cannot be expected that I should aid the survival of a periodical so largely devoted to the expression of views diametrically opposed to my own.” Whenever in particular authorities were set up, Spencer could be counted on to be found in the opposition; witness for example his frequent disparagement of the Old Masters. A few isolated

points can give however only a slight glimpse of Spencer's distinctive character as it stands out in the pages of his Autobiography and in his letters—an upright, self-reliant, unsubmissive man, with no reverence in his composition, ready always to stand up for what he conceived to be his rights, ambitious intellectually and with a keen desire for fame and recognition, but without the slightest spirit of pretence or display, sacrificing for his work the common desire of getting on financially, somewhat hard and implacable, more than a little pedantic and old-maidish, with an instinctive love for the orderly and patterned and a horror of confusion. Of his naturally equable and even stolid temperament one may perhaps judge from the anecdote which he thinks it worth while to relate, that on a fishing trip in Scotland, at the age of thirty-six, he became provoked and swore for the first time in his life, being reprovèd therefor by his Scotch companion. Spencer does himself fondly imagine that he had the makings of a rather rash and venturesome character. He relates two or three incidents in his life very circumstantially and with much apparent relish, where he seems to have acted without entire regard for consequences. But the surprise that he displays, and his labored attempt at explanation, are enough to show that of the real spirit of impulsiveness he had not the least conception.

Philosophically there is one obvious drawback attaching to Spencer's non-conformist temper, and his inability to learn from others. He confesses that he practically never was able to read a book with whose position he was not in sympathy; and the result is, in matters that lie outside the field of science proper, a provincialism which materially lessens the value of his conclusions. "The very nature of his intellectual life history is enough to arouse serious doubt. Here is a young man who finds himself holding, rather than thinks himself into, a certain—no doubt fruitful and valuable—conception. He sits down to work it out as a philosophy, and for over fifty years he adds one volume after another. Meanwhile his

original standpoint never alters. He gets essentially no modifying light upon it, meets with nothing which suggests to him that it may not be wholly adequate, profits scarcely at all from criticisms and objections. This is not the way the most comprehensive wisdom is attained. The fundamental background of the whole conception is clearly a good deal a matter of temperament, never fully and candidly scrutinized in the light of a wider human nature; and it is impossible to feel entire confidence in a system so limited, and even dogmatic in its form.

2. On its more general and speculative side, Spencer's philosophy starts with the metaphysical doctrine of the unknowableness of ultimate reality. The thesis itself is not novel; in one form or other it has indeed appeared as the prevailing note in both the main lines of speculative thought in England from the beginning of the century. Spencer professedly takes his cue from Hamilton and Mansel, and repeats their arguments without much attempt at originality. But in doing this he succeeds in bringing out even more sharply than Hamilton the latent difficulties of the position. For while he insists that we can prove our utter incompetence for absolute knowledge, it yet appears that the notion of the absolute remains as a positive content in our thought, and that we are compelled to think, or to hold as certain, not only its existence, but several important propositions about it. It is true we have no *definite* idea of this non-relative being, which nevertheless by our mental constitution we are forced to postulate; it is present only as a vague and indefinite consciousness. But we do not rid ourselves of the contradiction between having and at the same time not having an idea, by making the idea very indefinite and obscure. And if, as Spencer urges, the arguments for relativity all of them presuppose an absolute in the background, the proper conclusion would seem to be, not that an absolute must be accepted as an object of thought

by a being who is incompetent to think it, but that our arguments for relativity need to be revised.

It would however probably be unjust to Spencer to take him here too strictly at his word, and to conclude that because of logical complications his metaphysics is to be dismissed as meaningless. The doctrine of the Absolute, if one be disposed to interpret it sympathetically, contains certain elements which are more or less independent of his success at argument. The things which it would appear he is really interested in upholding are, first, the perception that questions about the intrinsic nature of reality stand on a different footing from the questions that science tries to answer, and cannot be met on the same terms, and, second, that in spite of this we are constrained to accept beliefs about the nature of the world, whether or not we can prove them, or "know" them in the scientific sense. Now the first point, quite apart from Spencer's labored and generally unconvincing arguments about relativity, might be thought to follow simply from a description of what scientific knowledge for him consists in. It is a knowledge, namely, of events, or phenomena, and reduces itself to experienced laws of sequence. In the nature of the case, then, if there are existences or entities that can be distinguished from their happenings or activities, they cannot be described in terms of the laws of invariable sequence, since these last apply to nothing but events, or changes. It does not follow from this that the nature of existence is necessarily unintelligible. If we agree to call nothing science unless it takes the form of a statement about the ordered occurrence of events, and regard as the one test of science the experimental test of finding that things happen according to prediction, then there can be no *scientific* knowledge of anything that is not an event; but it is at least conceivable that knowledge has other content besides these experimental laws.

And whether or not he is himself ready to admit it in words,

the justification of such elements of real or metaphysical truth is precisely the outcome of his doctrine of the Unknowable. Spencer's dogged assertion of the real existence of a Power or World Energy behind the phenomenal show of the evolutionary process can at best only verbally be distinguished from a bit of absolute knowledge. This confidence in an objective fact of real existence more fundamental than human experience, and than the phenomenal sequences which science formulates, is what enables him, even though it is with some loss of consistency, to escape from the thoroughgoing unreality doctrine which his principles at first seem to suggest; and it keeps his general philosophical results after all truer to our common convictions than many far more subtle and logically consistent systems which, in their eagerness to avoid "dualism," leave in obscurity the relation between those two plain facts of common experience—man with his particular fleeting conscious life, and the vast mysterious background which envelops everything human, which was when man was not, and will continue to be when he is no more.

3. Now if we ignore Spencer's agnostic implications, it is not impossible to give to his doctrine of relativity an interpretation which relieves it of some of its more obvious difficulties. There is a well-defined and quite proper sense of knowledge—"knowledge about," to use a later terminology, as opposed to "acquaintance with"—which expressly limits itself to acts of discrimination from, and comparison with, other things. In this sense I can know redness, for example, as certainly I can *describe* it, only in so far as it is recognized as standing in specific relationships to other colors, or to nervous changes, or what not. It is true that in another meaning I am plainly able to give my attention to qualitative redness as such; and if there were not direct acquaintance here with some elementary sort of fact not dependent cognitively for its nature on relations, there would be no starting point for the discovery of relational connections. But it may be agreed

that such knowledge is not yet "scientific." Limiting the term to the discriminating faculty alone, knowledge then is relative in the quite simple sense, not that it is produced *by* a relation between a subject and an object, but that its content is made up of the perception of relationships.

Even if we were to stop here, there is nothing to make it necessary to suppose that we are driven to agnosticism. Granted that the content of knowledge consists of relations, there is still the chance that these relations may actually characterize the objective universe, so that in knowing them we in so far know reality truly. The only thing against this is the prejudice that real discriminations cannot enter into true being, which is, instead, a blank and featureless unity—a prejudice which as a matter of fact Spencer shares with Hamilton. But it has no particular affinity with his own more scientific interests. And in spite of his disclaimer, it would seem that he really must suppose that the relations which our thought perceives hold good to an extent of reality also; if we take literally the claim that while force actually exists it in no respect resembles what the human mind means by force, or that force really persists unchanged in quantity although "quantity" has no place in real existence, or that relations in our experience correspond to relations in the real world in spite of the fact that nothing we know as relations is to be found there, it can only be at the expense of leaving our words without meaning.

And what Spencer chiefly has in mind when he asserts, as against Hamilton and Mansel, that the absolute is a positive conception and not a mere negation of thought, has no need to be inconsistent with this, if only Spencer would allow that, to be real, a thing does not have to be stripped of all definite character. The simplest interpretation of this absolute reality of which we have an obscure consciousness, but no idea, is to think of it as constituting that background of existence-stuff on which specific determinations of nature or character are

written. The pure logical "nature" of things, that is, it is impossible should stand alone; there is in experience an "ever-present sense of real existence," which cannot indeed be "thought," since we are now abstracting from all the distinctions and qualifying adjectives which thinking applies to it, but which can nevertheless be pointed to, wordlessly, as that which is common to all thoughts or experiences alike to make it possible that the qualifications should be there. "Our notion of the Limited is composed firstly of a consciousness of some kind of being, and secondly a consciousness of the limits under which it is known. In the antithetical notion of the Unlimited the consciousness of limits is abolished, but not the consciousness of some kind of being." Now the word "limit" might readily suggest—and Spencer sometimes utilizes such a meaning for his argument—a sort of boundary line between existence present in consciousness and reality not so present, a knowledge of this boundary implying therefore some knowledge also of a surrounding territory. This interpretation however has nothing in common with the first and simpler one; here the limit is, rather, the particular "form" under which existence appears, and the absolute is the "raw material" worked up into these forms, the undifferentiated substance of consciousness, the sense of reality dissociated from the special shapes which it assumes in "thought," the indefinite consciousness of something constant under all modes of being and apart from its appearances.<sup>1</sup>

4. Now the claim that thought implies existence in some sense that does not reduce existence to a mere conceptual definition, that Being is not simply one idea among others—a particularly abstract idea,—but a background of reality-stuff in which ideal characters and relations focus, is one that is deserving of more attention than modern philosophers have usually bestowed upon it. It however falls short in two ways of Spencer's special metaphysical needs. Such an absolute,

<sup>1</sup> *First Principles*, pp 89, ff (4th Ed, N. Y., 1891).



as there has already been occasion to remark, is "unknowable" only on the assumption that we can separate the forms that being takes from its raw material or stuff, and that this last alone truly *is*, though without being anything in particular; and taken as it stands it is at least equally conceivable that nothing can exist *without* a specific nature, which, therefore, truly characterizes it. But even apart from this, an analysis of consciousness into form and matter will in any case fail to carry us beyond the conscious experience itself; whereas for Spencer the Absolute connotes primarily a field of existence corresponding to the ordinary notion of an independent physical world on which the conscious life is causally dependent. And the claim that thought, or experience, implies a common stuff of reality capable of being felt as present in all its special embodiments—that it is "impossible these conditions or limits can be thought of apart from something to which they give the form"—is different from, and inconsistent with, the further claim that we are obliged to think of a *Cause*, positive though indefinite, which transcends the limit of our thought, or that our relative experience of force implies an absolute *Force* by which we are acted upon. So far, the indefinite "something" which the analysis has given us is simply the aspect of *feeling-existence* involved in every fact of consciousness. And in turning this into the recognition of an *independent* reality standing to our feelings in the relation of cause, Spencer is not only abandoning his first account of the way in which the absolute is "implied" by the relative, but he is explicitly retaining one relation at least as constitutive of the nature of the Absolute itself. Since his argument, however, leaves us only with bare Being stripped of all relationships whatever, this must apply equally to the relationship of cause, which we have no right accordingly to extrude from our conscious experience as its source. For Spencer's purpose, therefore, an altogether different line has to be taken when it becomes a question, not now of defining what he means by

the absolute as distinct from the relative, but of justifying its existence as an independent Power. This is the argument from the Universal Postulate, issuing in the doctrine of Transfigured Realism.

5. About the *origin* of the ultimate metaphysical beliefs on which, for Spencer, our possibilities of knowledge rest, his position is simple and straightforward. He holds consistently that they are implanted in us by the evolutionary process, which, though it begins with particular experiences, has made their results hereditary in the course of generations, so that now an organism is born with certain truths or forms of thought ready to function at the start; it is thus that he considers he has reconciled the opposing schools of the empiricist and the intuitionist. The logical justification of these truths, however, is more obscure. For the most part, Spencer rests it on a criterion which he calls the Universal Postulate. We accept the beliefs, namely, on the ground that their opposite is inconceivable; when we endeavor to set such an opposing proposition before the mind's eye, we discover that its terms cannot by any possibility be united in thought.

To this criterion one obvious objection appears. In some at least of Spencer's illustrations it is very questionable whether as a matter of fact the inconceivability really exists. Take, for example, the dogma of the indestructibility of matter; some philosophers have thought they found no trouble in conceiving that this may not be true, and the majority of mankind has actually disbelieved it in the past. To the modern scientist it may indeed appear incredible that matter should be destroyed; but there is another and easier interpretation of the source of this conviction. We may mean, namely, that the possibility cannot be believed *unless* we are ready to give up the whole system of accepted knowledge; remove the assumption, and the fabric of belief which has been built around it by man's intellectual efforts will collapse. On this showing, however, the certainty lies not in any single truth, but rather in the massive

appeal of the concrete body of settled opinion, dependent on innumerable facts of experience with their multiform avenues of access to our being. And for such an interpretation, the other side of Spencer's doctrine also—the origin through evolution—becomes a real part of the situation, instead of a logical irrelevance. If the conviction depends for its force upon the intimacy of its connection with the total intellectual world structure, then the recognition that the last word of systematized human belief—the doctrine of evolution—substantiates it, in that if evolution be true we should expect it to have brought about certain ways of thinking consistent—or they could not have survived—with the nature of reality, is an added ground of rational confidence in the postulate we have been using. And this second interpretation, according to which we assume a principle as true provisionally, and establish it by showing its congruity with all other beliefs, Spencer also occasionally adopts; though if taken seriously it would change the whole complexion of his doctrine of the Universal Postulate.

The ambiguity here is explained in part by the fact that there are certainties of two different sorts which Spencer lumps together. I perceive, for example, that I have at a given moment a particular kind of feeling, or that the lines which I envisage together are unequal; so long as the truth depends on the positive nature of such a directly apprehended fact or relation, it is intelligible to say that I can convince myself of the "certainty" which is a psychological accompaniment of the truth—though not the truth itself—by attempting to combine it with its opposite, and failing in the attempt. I fail because when I am intuiting something real and immediately present, I cannot possibly assent to what denies it. But there are other beliefs, about which I may in a practical way be almost as certain, which are not of this sort, because the connection of ideas which the denial involves are *not* contradictions. Thus if I experience a sequence of events *a* and *b*, I should contradict myself if I held that it was not this sequence,

but something different; but there would be no contradiction were I to suppose that on another occasion *a* might be followed by *c* instead, even though everything else were constant. And yet I am confident that this will not be so, and that uniformity in nature can be relied on.

6. Meanwhile it is to beliefs of this second sort that the Universal Postulate in Spencer's hands is chiefly intended to apply, and in particular to the ones with which we are here specially concerned—the belief in the persistence of Force which is to be the key for unlocking the mysteries of the evolutionary process, and the realistic belief in an existence independent of our conscious life. Spencer is creditably explicit in maintaining, against the idealistic disposition to evade the issue, the real existence of Being more ultimate than anything that can be identified as present in our conscious states. It is true he does not always quite live up to this; the endeavor, particularly in the *First Principles*, to state the distinction between subject and object as a difference between faint and vivid states of consciousness, comes very close to subjectivism. But his actual use of the distinction, especially in the *Psychology*, gives it a definitely realistic turn; sensations, or vivid states, instead of being identified with the objective world, are recognized as, equally with ideas, belonging to the subject, their closer connection with the notion of external existence meaning only that they are more directly an expression of the ultimate Force constituting the reality back of physical nature. It is this reference to an unknown Power which now plays the leading part in the definition of the "object"—a Power beyond consciousness on which our sensations depend, and which we are led to think of "symbolically" in terms of the experience of force that attends the exercise of our own activity.<sup>1</sup>

When we turn to details, however, a number of doubtful issues are raised. That there is something which stands in

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 154 ff.; *Psychology*, Vol. II, Pt VII, Chaps. 18-19.

relation to our human energies, and which is able to initiate changes in us, is indeed a very persistent and universal human belief; but its connection with the Universal Postulate is less easy to make out. Spencer's argument implies the existence of an indissoluble cohesion between sensations and an indefinite consciousness that stands for a mode of being beyond consciousness; but the ground for this necessity is far from clear. In the first place, Spencer leaves his notion of this Absolute—when we rule out the former definition, which is irrelevant to an absolute "cause"—entirely without any content with which an association could be set up; and even if we were to grant that it has a content, its connection with sensation would still lack that inevitability which the Postulate demands. Theoretically it is quite possible to think sensation apart from an external source, as is evidenced by the popularity of an idealistic hypothesis among philosophers as logically competent as Spencer himself. Other difficulties suggest themselves when we try to construe intelligibly the relation of the conscious fact, alike to the Power of which it is a manifestation, and to the bodily structure with which it is correlated. At one time Spencer was disposed to think of mind and nervous process as both in the same scientific sense manifestations of energy, and capable, like heat and motion, of being transformed one into the other. On reflection he came to see the lack of evidence for this, or even of any precise scientific meaning; though he continues in some vague and undefined sense to call them appearances of the same unknown Power. While however a physical fact may in an intelligible sense be reduced to a "phenomenon," if there is presupposed a conscious mind to which it can appear, the term does not fit so readily the conscious fact itself. A sensation, if it is anything distinctive at all, is for the moment at least real just as it stands, whatever more in the way of reality there may be. Spencer may think that he had evaded the difficulty by his definition of the real as "that which persists." But this is a definition of

*permanent* existence, not of existence as such; and it does not preclude the possibility that transitory being may also be real so long as it lasts, and not mere illusory appearance. And if we once recognize that sensation can be called appearance only at best in the sense that it is partial and transitory, and not that it is unreal, it ceases to stand on the same level with matter; and to speak of the two as different aspects of the unknown reality, or of consciousness as the opposite "side" of matter, is to fall back on a metaphor to which no distinct idea corresponds. Indeed if we are to take seriously the assertion that phenomenal matter, as a "vivid" state of consciousness, is still a state of the ego, there is no double aspect even, but only a single manifestation of reality in the form of consciousness, if this be a "manifestation" at all.

7. So far the notion of evolution has played no conspicuous part in Spencer's metaphysics, except as indirectly it has supplied a way of reconciling the experience philosophy with intuitionism; and even this is a doctrine whose metaphysical importance it would be easy to exaggerate. In so far as an inherited tendency takes the form of a disposition to repeat, or to expect the repetition of, a sequence in experience, the explanation is plausible; but there are other cases where its application is more obscure. Thus when a mathematician discovers a novel and necessary truth in his science, there is no obvious way of deriving his certainty from his ancestors, unless they were better mathematicians than we have been accustomed to believe. In any case, however, the epistemological value of the sort of belief that Spencer wants to justify lies not in its natural history, but in its present force and compulsion. We do not believe it because we know that it has been brought about by natural selection, though this when recognized may add to its prestige; we should never have been put in the way of constructing a theory of its evolutionary history had we not already accepted it and trusted it.

The real interest of Spencer's system for all except a handful of readers only begins when he turns from his theory of the Absolute to a concrete survey of the world of changing phenomena, and puts into actual operation the method of scientific generalization which he professes to identify with the possibility of valid thinking. It is already apparent that he is far from living up to this method in his more metaphysical moods. Even his theory of evolution is in two important ways a creation of metaphysics rather than of science; not only does the concrete knowledge which it presupposes imply original postulates that are not scientific matters of fact, but the deductive justification which Spencer tries to give his evolutionary formula precedes logically, rather than is derived from, the formula itself. This *a priori* standpoint it is difficult at times to disentangle from his treatment of questions of detail, even when he supposes himself to be on the safe ground of science; and it is responsible for some of the more unconvincing aspects of his philosophy. But primarily evolution is for him the outcome of an inductive inquiry; and as such its evidence is largely independent of his theory of relativity, and of the unknowable.

With Lamarckianism Spencer had come in contact through reading a book intended to controvert it; but his sympathy remained rather with the view he found criticized. The reason was not that he had any special competency to solve the biological problem, or that he was able to meet the objections which biologists generally had felt to lie in the way of Lamarck's theory; with his usual preference for reaching large conclusions first, and then backing them up by evidence, it became clear to him that species *must* have been evolved, because the only other alternative was the inadmissible one of special creation. And now with the idea once implanted in his mind, he was not content to limit it to biology; instinctively he began to universalize it. The task of finding a formula to express the new insight proved a laborious one; but at last

the famous Spencerian definition of evolution was evolved, and the remainder of his life was devoted to its exploitation in the various fields of human knowledge.

8. There is a side from which this definition is bound to appear pretentious as a claim to stand for a final philosophy. To suppose that the universe has been accounted for when you have said that things are all the time growing more complex and more unified is to have a limited notion of the philosopher's task. The recognition of development is clearly compatible with a great variety of opposing philosophies. This is not to deny the value of Spencer's work. While development does not settle the problems of philosophy, it does often change their face; and no question perhaps can be settled finally without reference to it. Spencer was largely influential in making the idea a power in modern thought. Had it not been for the reinforcement that came from Darwin's application of the idea to a particular scientific problem, it is not certain how far he would have succeeded. But he was lucky in becoming possessed of the conception just at the moment when forces were preparing in the intellectual world for its favorable reception. And the impression he was able to make was vastly increased by the really remarkable fertility which he showed in applying it to problems of concrete interest. No man of his generation, or perhaps of his century, started a greater number of fruitful scientific theories in the most varied fields. Most of these theories would now be recognized as at best very partial. Spencer was much too disposed to be satisfied with logically simple explanations, more in accord with the deductive demands of his system than with the complexity of the facts. But his suggestions had the merit of opening up inquiry along many lines that have led to permanent and valuable results.

9. Apart from deficiencies in its application, there are to be noted also certain debatable characteristics in the concept of evolution itself as Spencer understands it. One comment



which it calls for at the start has to do with the whole ideal of method which it implies. There are obvious limitations to an explanation that takes the form of abstract generalization. In fact this is not explanation at all, in the sense in which Darwin's theory of natural selection is an explanation; and if we are tempted to take it as such, it suggests almost irresistibly an emphasis which is by no means self-evidently true, and which, if it is once assumed without clear justification from the facts, will inevitably lead us astray on matters of importance. A law, as Spencer thinks of it, is obtained by dropping out all differences as unessential, and retaining only the common elements. But now if we regard this also as an account of how things actually came about, the problem arises of getting the differences we have ignored back into the world again. And if all we have to work with is an exceedingly simplified physical situation such as science reveals to us when we trace the universe back in time as far as we can go, and an exceedingly abstract formula of the process of succeeding change, we are led naturally to the conclusion that the later stages are reducible in their essential elements to the earlier. Instead of setting out to interpret reality, as is at least conceivably the proper way, by examining the outcome, and defining reality as the sort of affair that is capable of issuing in these results, we look rather to the beginning, and argue that if what we find there seems to be too simple to account for later facts, the appearance of novelty must be an illusion.

It is this latter attitude which Spencer himself adopts. His main intellectual interest lies in reducing the new to the old, and in explaining apparent advance in terms of what somehow has been there all the time. But if this be taken strictly, it empties the term evolution of the distinctive meaning which it conveys to the popular imagination, and it becomes, as Spencer's definition suggests, no more than a constant reshuffling of unchanging elements. These may attain to more complex and intricate groupings; but a difference in the group-

ing of elements is nevertheless the whole story. There is no genuine element of novelty anywhere injected; no surprises can ever be sprung on the world. This tendency to minimize the importance of differences is one, and perhaps the main occasion, why the results of naturalism seem so often to be hostile to the spiritual life. The human interest is otherwise; if science wants to find the beginnings of conscience, say, in the brutes, morality is chiefly concerned for just those later refinements that distinguish brutes from men. So in the sociological field, this predilection shows in Spencer's constant minimizing of man as an active agent, in his resort to the environment and its eternal laws—man's own nature is of course one of the products of the past working of these laws—to account for human changes, and in his reluctance to allow us to call upon personal initiative and ingenuity to shape the world into courses unpredictable in terms simply of the past. Everything in conduct is to be explained by "incident forces" that rain in upon us from the surroundings, and gradually shape the organism into harmony with themselves; and whatsoever is more than this cometh of evil.

The difficulties which such an evolutionary ideal has to meet were never strongly enough felt by Spencer to impair the confidence he reposed in his formula, or to lead him to go to very much trouble to obviate them; but it is clear that difficulties exist. We find it hardest to avoid admitting differences of quality, as well as of complexity, in the realm of conscious phenomena. To say nothing of such facts as morality, and art, and certain aspects of the life of reason, where our natural tendency is to think that we discover genuine new qualities of experience, the mere existence of sensations puts a strain upon the attempt to reduce all change to the redistribution of matter and motion. Sensational qualities, like redness and sweetness and painfulness, have all the marks of being novelties incapable of being stated in terms of what precedes their appearance in human feeling. And here for once Spencer him-

self tacitly admits a break in the continuity of the evolutionary process; he allows, and even asserts, that the conscious fact cannot by any possibility be reduced to matter. But his emphasis on this is clearly due to his metaphysical, rather than to his evolutionary interest; and when he turns to the historical problem of the origin of consciousness, the whole effort is to minimize the difference. Consciousness, in Spencer's analysis, is more and more refined, more and more simplified, till it reaches the attenuated form of a momentary psychical "shock."<sup>1</sup> *Within* the conscious realm therefore, at any rate, qualitative differences can all be explained away; the seemingly ultimate distinctions between red and green, sound and taste, sensation and relation, are illusory, to be accounted for by the greater or less complexity of the combinations into which these simple units enter. It is true that one thing still remains to trouble the unity of our system—the psychic shock itself. But since this is near enough like a physical shock to go by the same name, Spencer seems to think that it is not necessary to make a fuss about it; there is such a slight difference between a little difference and no difference at all, that apparently we can afford to overlook quibbles about the law of contradiction. Indeed were it not for his disclaimer, the reader would certainly get the impression at times—in the chapter on the Nature of Intelligence in particular—that the difference has entirely disappeared, and that we are being shown how psychical changes "merge into those which we distinguish as physical," and arise from them by a process of gradual differentiation.

10. Any attempt to cover the entire ground of Spencer's evolutionary philosophy would of necessity have to take the form of a mere catalog; it will be enough to pick out certain of its more outstanding features, especially such as emphasize the speculative demands of his system rather than the mere leading of facts. On the whole, as has been implied, Spencer

<sup>1</sup> *Psychology*, Vol. I, Pt. II, Chap. 1.

is more vulnerable as a deductive than as an empirical philosopher. The evolutionary formula itself, it is safe to say, would have won very little acceptance had its evidence rested on Spencer's derivation of it as a necessity of thought; indeed it is a rather amazing example of speculative self-confidence, even among philosophers, that anyone should have been able to convince himself that the whole necessary course of cosmic development is predictable from the bare proposition that energy persists. So also the more directly speculative aspects within the process are derived from its general principles, the safer one usually is in viewing them with some suspicion. And this is notably true of the application of the idea of evolution to the life of man, and to ethical and social values.

11. Spencer's ethics is, in the large, an attempt to impart to Utilitarian hedonism a scientific and deductive character, and to rescue it from mere empiricism. His method of doing this involves a double meaning of the term "good." From the standpoint of objective science, to begin with, a thing is good when it serves a required end. Now the end, in biological terms, of the human organism is self-preservation, or equilibrium, or adjustment to the conditions of the environment. We have, accordingly, a biological test of good conduct which is independent of the vagaries of individual judgment, and is capable of receiving a precise scientific statement.

It is this first conception of the good which furnishes the guiding clue to what is most characteristic in Spencer's ethical doctrine; and it suggests several queries. It is worth while noticing, to begin with, a certain assumption which it involves in Spencer's hands—one so congenial to his temperament that he overlooks the fact that it *is* an assumption. Natural laws commonly represent for Spencer not only facts to be recognized, but ideals which have a moral claim upon us; as one of his friends once remarked, "The laws of nature are to him what revealed religion is to us." To attempt to interfere with them is, therefore, not only foolish and meddlesome; Spencer

often speaks in a tone to give the impression that it is impious as well. It is necessary to insist that such an attitude needs further justification. A natural law is not as such a "value"; to recognize that it is true is one thing, to approve it quite another. Here for example is the fundamental law of natural selection itself, and the survival of the fittest; is the fact that evolution has been dependent on such a law a sufficient reason why we should, from the standpoint of our present conduct, abase ourselves before it, and call it good? One would scarcely have expected so thoroughgoing a non-conformist as Spencer to have taken toward the *status quo* in nature the attitude of humble subservience which he was so earnest in repudiating toward earthly and heavenly powers. To be sure it is a deduction from his principles that, since we have been fashioned into what we are by natural laws, there must have been developed in us an approval-feeling to correspond; but this is only one case of many in which Spencer allows his faith in theory to run ahead of the facts. The recognition of a law of nature may leave us quite unmoved; we may even think of it—and this with many people is what happens in the case of natural selection—with strong feelings of dislike. And since a sense of duty depends upon what we actually find to be the nature of our approving judgments, rather than on what a theoretical philosophy tells us that we ought to expect to find, it is important for ethics that we should be able to give some further justification for the claim of biological adjustment to be accepted, not only as an end, but as the one *desirable* end; and this introduces a new element of "value" in the situation.

12. Tacitly Spencer recognizes this demand in his alternative definition. Grant that we can describe life in terms of adjustment to environment, and it may still reasonably be asked, he perceives, whether life, even a life perfectly adjusted, is really *good*. And the answer which he accepts is the traditional answer of hedonism. Life is good only in so far as it

involves a surplusage of pleasure over pain. It does not follow however that we are simply back again in empirical Utilitarianism. The feeling of pleasure is indeed the only good; but this feeling we also know from science is an accompaniment of organic equilibrium. And while, to be sure, in the absence of a perfect adjustment, there is at present only a rough identity between the feeling and the biological tests, the partial inconsistency is removed when we take into account that growing approximation toward equilibrium which evolution presupposes. Just as our present feelings are accounted for by the utility of actions to the organism in the past, so new adjustments will gradually grow habitual, and therefore pleasurable, until in the end we shall have the evolutionary goal, and the sense of subjective satisfaction, meeting in a state of affairs where, since man is now in complete harmony with his environment, he will instinctively do the right thing both for himself and for others, and will live happily ever after. And this knowledge of the ultimate goal gives us, accordingly, an objective standard by which the deficiencies of present feeling can be tested and corrected.

It follows that for Spencer a scientific ethics can apply only to perfect and final man, and not, in any full sense, to human beings as they exist today. Our actual morality is a compromise which has after all to be got at more or less by rule of thumb. We have to do many things which involve a certain amount of pain, and which therefore are only relatively right, not absolutely so; the precepts of absolute morality must wait until our constitution has become by the further process of evolution so completely harmonized with its surroundings, that virtue comes by nature and without effort. A connected consequence is that duty is only a passing phase in the ethical life, due to our imperfection as moral beings. Duty in its origin is an outcome of the need for putting constraint upon men's inclinations, owing to the fact that they are not as yet adequately socialized. This constraint, effected

originally through the external agencies of law and public opinion and religion—the visible ruler, the invisible ruler, and society at large,—becomes in course of time a second nature which loses consciousness of its source, and remains only as a vague sense of authority laid upon us. As man's reason develops, the need for such outside pressure is gradually supplanted by a recognition of the value of the socially constrained act in terms of its own more intrinsic consequences, though by association the vague sense of authority continues for a time to attach to this recognition also; but when at last we are fully adjusted to social conditions it will disappear, leaving only the spontaneous pleasure of doing what we like to do.

13. Perhaps the question that gets closest to the more distinctive features of Spencer's ethical theory concerns itself with the underlying supposition that it is possible for man to get outside the actual present fashion in which his nature judges things in the way of likes and dislikes, and to subject these to the dictates of a scientific hypothesis about the world, and the course of its future changes. What is the justification for identifying morality with the good of a hypothetical being not yet in existence, and differing widely from ourselves? We at least may premise that this is not the way we ordinarily think of moral problems. In practice we are concerned with actions here and now, not with those of our remote descendents. It is our own good and the good of our fellows that we are aiming at; and if the act is the best possible act under the circumstances, it is the right act, absolutely and not relatively, though it may not involve all the pleasurable consequences that would accrue in a perfect world. To deal with this last consideration we have to shift the issue; we now are taking as the problem of ethics, not the everyday business of living, but the rather grandiose task of carrying on the process of cosmic evolution, and seeing so far as lies in us that it does not go astray. Indeed on Spencer's showing the question, What is it my duty to do? apparently is crowded out altogether in

a scientific ethics. *I* cannot answer it on principle, because ethical principles apply only under conditions different from my own; and my perfect descendents cannot answer it, because they will never have any occasion to raise it, the matter being settled for them by their natural constitution.

To this it might perhaps be replied that we are not left without an answer after all; our very formula supplies one. What could be a greater and more inspiring ideal of ethical conduct than to think of it, not as dealing with matters of casuistic detail, but as a coöperation with the forces of evolution, a grand campaign to remake human nature? But it is just the character of this ideal that gives point to the suspicions which it will arouse in minds adjusted to a less ambitious program. There is, to begin with, a reasonable doubt about our intellectual capacity to turn the very abstract generalizations of evolutionary science into a source of explanation sufficiently precise to guide us in the work of furthering the world's progress toward a creature different from ourselves, and living under different conditions. A few very general things can of course be said—most of which, however, everyone knew perfectly well before the philosophy of evolution was invented—about what is required if life is to be preserved at all, and the race to go on. But what constitutes fulness and satisfactoriness of life, as distinct from length of days, we can only tell if we know the exact nature of the being who is to be satisfied; and it is difficult to see how anything but an empirical trying out of the possibilities of living can give us this. Continuance is compatible with innumerable sorts of natures, from the *amœba* up; and mere complexity, mere addition to the complications and the busyness of our lives, is no self-evident definition of an ethical ideal. It is the *kinds* of activity that concern us as creatures aiming at moral satisfaction, not their number simply; and the more we emphasize complexity, the more insistent becomes the need of some principle for choosing between the alternatives.



But even if it were possible to anticipate much more exactly than we have any reason to expect to do the specific course of future evolution, another difficulty remains; the motive to its attainment must still be supplied. Why should a man give up the ends that afford him satisfaction now, because he is convinced that to some other being in the future they will not appeal? Changes in human nature may be bound to happen, but that is no reason why they should concern us who are not to live to see them; we might as well govern our lives in view of the ultimate dissolution of the solar system. It may amuse the scientist to prophesy these coming changes in the cosmos; but this, especially in view of the very real chance that the scientist may prove mistaken, has no relevancy to ethics. Of course it may be that one thing that appeals to men, or to some of them, is the "contemplation from the heights of thought of that far-off life of the race never to be enjoyed by them, but only by a remote posterity." But this is a motive to whose strength it would be unsafe to trust interests of any very vital importance, even if the practical desirability of this were clearer than it seems to be. Certainly the classes on whom the evils of the time bear hardest are not likely to take kindly to Spencer's suggestion that they ought to be willing to wait for evolution to bring relief to their posterity. And in any case the thing even here that moves us is not the scientific perception of a future event, but the empirical fact that we do have here and now this particular interest among others.

One may conjecture, then, that Spencer's notion of the ethical goal is really less dependent on pure scientific deduction than he thinks; in proposing it to us as an *ideal*, it is, probably, the consonancy of the proposal with his own sense of ethical fitness which convinces him that the connection with his formula is a logical and necessary one, rather than logic which determines what he shall approve. And now this suggests the question to what extent Spencer's notion of the good life is really such as

arouses our spontaneous enthusiasm and approval. And certainly an ideal from which all self-sacrifice and all moral effort must needs be eliminated, and where impulse can be trusted always to go right mechanically, will not be accepted by everyone as of the highest order. There is something that grates a little on our sensibilities when we are told that human love, for example, is only perfect, only in the full sense good and right, when altruism has become so instinctive as to lead to what is best for others without the least call upon our capacity for giving up any pleasure of our own. Nor will a world which has stopped growing, and in which life is a continuous round of unchanging habit perfectly adjusted to its surroundings—a curious ideal for an evolutionist,—seem very amusing to those who happen to feel that an element of struggle and adventure, and the presence of possibilities of development still waiting to be tapped, are involved in a genuinely satisfying experience.

14. Meanwhile one aspect of Spencer's theory ought to be made more explicit, since it plays so large a part in his sociology. Since ethical advance lies not in a more adequate realization of our present constitution, but in a change of human nature, it can, Spencer holds, only be brought about by the continuance in future generations of the same process of organic modification, particularly the modification of the feelings, which has resulted in the development of the species up to date. This is the theoretical justification of that attitude of passive obedience to nature to which Spencer is committed, and which seems in the end the only real suggestion of practical guidance which his theory supplies. The chief duty of man is to stand aside and keep his hands off the cosmic machinery; trust to evolution, and forbear doing anything to interfere with those forces which, by a law of inevitable necessity, are gradually bringing about a harmonious adjustment of man's constitution to the world in which he lives. In the realm of politics this is the doctrine of *laissez-faire* which

strikes the dominant note of Spencer's sociological teachings,—the doctrine that the organized action of the state should confine itself strictly to the negative task of ensuring liberty to the individual to do as he pleases so long as he does not interfere with a similar liberty in other men, and should refrain from more positive attempts to engineer the cause of human welfare.

There are several ways in which Spencer tries to attach this practical conclusion to his evolutionary premises. Thus it is the teaching of the law of evolution that functions become more and more specialized in special organs. The government is such an organ, whose one distinctive work is to prevent mutual aggression. By the general law of things it ought to confine itself therefore to its proper task; if it gets beyond these bounds, and tries to accomplish that for which other machinery exists, it not only will bungle this, but it will lose so much energy also for the proper performance of its own peculiar task. The most fundamental reason, however, is to be found in Spencer's understanding of the method of progress. The essence of justice is that every man should be free from external interference; and why? In the last analysis, because otherwise men are enabled to escape the consequences of their acts, and so natural selection is hindered in its beneficent task. The chief reason why government interference proves always a calamity is, that it tends to even up the inequalities among men, relieving weakness and ignorance of the penalties that are their due, and preventing superior capacity from peopling the world with its better stock. For it is this that in the end is alone decisive. The one possibility of progress is through those changes in the human organism, brought about through "multitudinous generations," which bring it into greater harmony with the conditions of life; and the road to this is the one that nature has always followed—the storing up of successful habit till it becomes hereditary, and the elimination of those members of the species that fail to qualify.

This is perhaps the supreme example of the light-heartedness with which Spencer rests the most fateful issues on the infallibility of his logical deductions. There is no more difficult and complex problem waiting to be solved than that which concerns the desirable forms and limits of state activity; but for Spencer the question is a closed one, which only an extreme of intellectual perversity can prevent from being answered as he himself would answer it. It is true he adduces many practical considerations to justify his attitude, some of them impressive, and all deserving to be weighed; but it is not these that clinch the matter to his own mind, or give him his dogmatic assurance. There are several things that might have suggested greater caution. One is that his reasoning everywhere involves a belief in the inheritance of acquired characters, a belief which had already become scientifically dubious. So too the application of the struggle for existence to the conception of human and cultural progress is by no means a simple matter; it involves important points of difference from that form of natural selection that goes on in the brute world, and these differences Spencer's rough-and-ready identification mostly overlooks. But perhaps the objection easiest to set forth is that which our ethical prepossessions themselves supply. Spencer does not allow sentiment to keep him from drawing conclusions which he is aware will not be altogether popular. "A sad population of imbeciles would our schemers fill the world with, could their plans last. Why, the whole effort of nature is to get rid of such—to clear the world of them, and make room for better. He on whom his own stupidity or vice or idleness entails loss of life must in the generalizations of philosophy be classed with the victims of weak viscera or malformed limbs. Beings thus imperfect are nature's failures, and are recalled by her when found to be such. Along with the rest they are put on trial. If they are sufficiently complete to live, they do live, and it is well they should live. If they are not sufficiently complete to live they die, and it is best they

should die." Even if we could share Spencer's pious confidence that "nature's" penalties are always just, and proportioned to the offence, the assumption that no potentialities exist in man which the hit-or-miss arrangements of natural circumstance may overlook, although a more artificial ordering of affairs might have supplied the occasion for their development, would seem to call for reconsideration.

Spencer himself would allow that it is asking too much that we forego entirely the claims of compassion; he qualifies by adding that he would not forbid assistance to the ignorant and the miserable so long as this is left to individual initiative. But if the point is that weakness should not be bolstered up and protected from its natural consequences, it is a little hard to see why this is any less calamitous because it is due to private rather than to public stupidity. Spencer has ways of softening the difficulty. Charity has a use, for example, in benefiting the moral character of the giver; and in any case a man, if left to himself, can safely be counted on not to be charitable enough to offset his own advantages, and those of his offspring. The implication here is, however, that along with relief will go, or ought to go, a refusal to allow the needy to propagate their kind; and Spencer has to confess that the chance of this is very slim in practice. The consequence is that as he surveys the disloyalty of man to nature, he is driven pretty nearly to despair; it would almost seem that the march of the cosmic process, whose necessity had been so triumphantly proven, is in danger after all of being turned aside by the folly of the human mind in refusing to see the truth of the Spencerian philosophy.

15. One additional aspect of the Synthetic Philosophy remains to be mentioned—the treatment of religion. On the historical side, religious beliefs are of course, like other beliefs, evolved; and in this connection belongs Spencer's well-known theory of the origin of religion in ancestor-worship, arising out of an earlier belief in ghosts or doubles which the

phenomena of dreams, echoes, shadows, and the like, suggest to the savage mind. Historical religions, accordingly, are discredited at the start by an understanding of their source. And not only are historical beliefs demonstrably inadequate, but there is in the nature of the case a reason for holding that all such beliefs must fail, since it has been shown that, by the composition of our minds, we are necessarily shut out from a knowledge of ultimate existence. But now having thus got rid of every positive content in religious belief, Spencer is ready with a substitute. The irreducible minimum of all religion is the sense of the ultimate mystery of the universe; and not only does science fail to touch this, but it deepens it with every fresh advance. A feeling of awe, accordingly, in the presence of the Unknown and Unknowable, is the final form that religion is destined to take.

It is no very arduous task to point out the emotional deficiencies of a religion of the Unknowable. But here once more it would perhaps be rash to suppose that Spencer really intends at bottom all that he seems to say. He enters a protest against the imputation that the unknowableness of reality is what for him forms the object of religion, rather than the positive existence of which the proposition that we cannot know it holds;<sup>1</sup> and this is a distinction without a difference unless it stands for something like the religious commonplace that God, while known to possess the attributes that deserve our reverence, yet possesses them in a form and a degree beyond the power of the finite mind to grasp. There appears a slight presumption that Spencer would not have denied the right to give some measure of faith to a larger and less exact method of analogical reason, for the sake of coming to at least a conjectural understanding of the world of reality beyond the human, provided we find that to frame such a system of reasonable faith is necessary to our mental and spiritual health. It would seem from occasional utterances—John Fiske refers

<sup>1</sup> *First Principles*, p. 595.

to definite statements made to him personally in conversation—that Spencer did not dogmatically exclude such tentative and hypothetical constructions. And one passage in particular, at the close of the *Autobiography*, gives some color to the suggestion. After saying that he had come in later life to look more calmly on current forms of religious belief, Spencer goes on: “Largely, if not chiefly, this change of feeling towards religious creeds and their sustaining institutions has resulted from a deepening conviction that the sphere occupied by them can never become an unfilled sphere, but that there must continue to arise afresh the great questions concerning ourselves and surrounding things; and that, if not positive answers, then modes of consciousness standing in place of positive answers, must ever remain. . . . When we think of the myriads of years of the earth’s past during which have arisen and passed away low forms of creatures great and small, which, murdering and being murdered, have gradually evolved, how shall we answer the question, To what end? Ascending to wider problems, in which way are we to interpret the lifelessness of the greater celestial masses—the giant planets and the Sun, in proportion to which the habitable planets are mere nothings? If we pass from these relatively near bodies to the thirty millions of remote suns and solar systems, where shall we find a reason for all this apparently unconscious existence, infinite in amount compared with the existence which is conscious—a waste Universe as it seems? Then behind these mysteries lies the all-embracing mystery,—whence this universal transformation which has gone on unceasingly throughout a past eternity, and will go on unceasingly throughout a future eternity? And along with this arises the paralyzing thought, What if of all that is thus incomprehensible to us there exists no comprehension anywhere? . . . No wonder that men take refuge in authoritative dogma! Lastly come the insoluble questions concerning our own fate; the evidence seeming so strong that the relations of mind and nervous structure are such that cessa-

tion of the one accompanies dissolution of the other, while simultaneously comes the thought, so strange and so difficult to realize, that with death there lapses both the consciousness of existence and the consciousness of having existed. Thus religious creeds which in one way or other occupy the sphere that rational interpretation seeks to occupy and fails, and fails the more it seeks, I have come to regard with a sympathy based on community of need, feeling that dissent from them results from inability to accept the solutions offered, joined with the wish that solutions could be found."

### § 3. *G. H. Lewes*

1. Spencer's is the only attempt at a really comprehensive philosophy which evolution, as a scientific doctrine, inspired; but the influence of the theory of evolution helped everywhere to stiffen that prevailing naturalistic temper among scientifically trained men, based on an ardent faith in the possibilities of scientific method and a distrust of theology and of metaphysics, which had already been an ingredient in Utilitarianism, and which was to have a brilliant career down to nearly the close of the century. Without the help extended by the spectacular successes of the physical sciences, it is scarcely probable that Utilitarian naturalism would have held its own for very long; in spite of its fascination for minds of a certain cast, it is too far removed from the popular fancy in religion and politics, and its metaphysical foundations are too insecure, to make it easy to imagine for it a continued triumph. The appearance of a powerful ally, however, gave the naturalistic spirit a new lease of life. Modern science is much too solid a fact to fear in the long run attacks from either theory or prejudice; and it was natural that its prestige should win a respectful hearing for supplementary doctrines also. When the man in the street hears it said repeatedly that "scientists" believe



so and so, he can hardly fail in time to be impressed; and even the controversialist finds it hard to overcome entirely his awe in the presence of the more rigorous and realistic methods of his scientific opponents. Meanwhile the interest of science in philosophical addenda was not quite the same in motive with that of the Utilitarians. Here and there a scientist of course will have a metaphysical bent as well; but it is not likely that the widespread interest in philosophical problems in the second half of the century would have been in evidence had science been as free from outside interference as at the present day. It was because religion pretended to pronounce on matters in which the scientist was vitally concerned, that he thought it necessary to clear the ground with a metaphysical attack upon the current creed. The Utilitarian had also had the same desire to undermine religion, but his reason was a different one; it was a practical and social reason, the outcome of the belief that religious conservatism was on the side of the enemies of progress.

2. A typical representative of the claims of scientific method, whose work shows clearly the influence of the new ideas in their transitional stage, is George Henry Lewes. Lewes was a competent amateur scientist, and an industrious and versatile man of letters. His first venture was his *Biographical History of Philosophy*, a very readable book which is not likely however to please the philosopher, since it proceeds on the assumption that books on philosophy have mostly been a waste of ink. In a later revision however, and in his more mature work entitled *Problems of Life and Mind*, this superciliousness has appreciably abated. The blame is now placed not on metaphysics itself, but on its mistaken method; and Lewes, assuming himself the rôle of metaphysician, sets out to show how philosophical problems can profitably be attacked.

Lewes' program consists in the disentanglement from philosophy of all the elements that are "metempirical," and so essentially insoluble and meaningless, and the restatement of its

problems in a form that can conceivably be answered in terms of experience. Thus the notion of a soul behind mental phenomena, of a substratum in which qualities inhere, of power as an effective agent, of law as that which is supposed to govern changes instead of undertaking simply to describe them—these are all metempirical, mere hypostasized verbal abstractions, and should be rigorously excluded from a scientific philosophy. Philosophy accordingly becomes a logic of the highest concepts or generalizations of science. Lewes' analysis of fundamental scientific notions, though its results have no striking novelty, is skilfully done, and there is nothing of necessity to prevent its being accepted in large measure by philosophers of a different school. What really separates positivism from other philosophies is not this logic of science, but the further claim that science exhausts all the legitimate possibilities of knowledge; and here the issue becomes less straightforward.

3. It is doubtful whether Lewes has, in spite of his readings in the history of philosophy, more than a vague understanding of the "metaphysical" method which he is attacking; to him it has the popular sense of an appeal to some supposed special intellectual faculty or abstract form of thought, or, even worse, to final causes, as a competitor of scientific explanation. Now neither of these things is necessarily involved in the supposition that it may be possible to attain a knowledge of the nature of reality other than the tracing of experienced sequences. One can put the problem in a way to prejudge the issue—if such an inquiry is made to mean, that is, a hunt for some characterless entity, some underlying substratum, whose like never enters into experience. But to ask whether we may not perhaps have a right to think the nature of reality in terms such as experience itself supplies, is not an obvious absurdity. Take once more the simplest possible case. The law of the sequence of sensations is one thing, the nature of the sensation itself is another; and if sensation be a real part

of the universe, as supposedly it is, in knowing it we have a knowledge which is not merely relative, or reducible to scientific laws of phenomena. The same ambiguity appears in Lewes' principle of relativity that appeared in Spencer. Our knowledge, he everywhere insists, is necessarily and forever only relative; what does this mean? That I cannot know *about* a thing, or describe it, except in terms of its relation to other things, is doubtless true; and if I choose to speak of knowing only in this sense, there can be no knowledge without relations. But now while all the information I have about red, *other than its intrinsic redness*, comes from acts of comparison, the redness itself does not depend on the comparison, but rather the comparison on it; and I plainly can have acquaintance with it in its own right.

This need not mean that a single entity can *exist* by itself; the discovery of relations attaching to it shows that it somehow belongs to a related world. And if to know a thing "in itself" is made to mean—and this is how Lewes insists on taking it—that we know it as something that has no relations, that is, as it cannot exist, it is a simple matter for him to appear to make his point. But to uphold the thesis that all knowledge is relative, it is necessary to get rid not only of an unknown substratum conceived as an unrelated existence, but of all knowledge content that has its own independent and non-relational character; and this Lewes' argument, at least, quite fails to do. There seems no reason in the nature of *knowledge*, then, why it *may* not be possible to claim acquaintance with the actual texture of the world, as well as with descriptive laws of change and sequence. This may lie outside the strictly *scientific* interest; the intrinsic qualitative nature of reality, if we could get at it, would very likely not help us to explain events. But the elimination of every other possible interest in favor of the scientific is what positivism must justify rather than assume.

It is not necessary however to establish a rival philosophy

in order to throw doubt on Lewes' conception of philosophic method; it is sufficient to appeal from his theory to his practice. Whatever his success in establishing the methods of science, it is certainly not these same methods that he uses in prosecuting the inquiry. If all knowledge is relative, we at least must make an exception of the truth *that* all knowledge is relative. It is the necessary intrusion of the knowledge problem into the situation which destroys the advantage that the positivist philosopher counts on through his supposed backing by science. And when we once enter seriously on this problem, we are bound to discover sooner or later that we have passed from laws of sequence to questions of "nature"—have become, whether we wish it or not, ontologists. It is therefore by its treatment of the foundation concepts of psychology in their relation to the objectively known facts of the world, that the sufficiency of a scientific philosophy is chiefly tested.

Lewes' discussion of psychology itself as an empirical science has undeniable merits. To the meagre sensational data of the Utilitarians he makes several important additions—intuition as the perception of relations, ancestral experience which supplies ready-made "forms of thought" or permanent ways of grouping the elements of experience, and the conception of a "social medium" in addition to the physical. In particular, the relationship of the conscious life to the biological organism is grasped by him with a precision not surpassed by Spencer, and governs nearly every aspect of his treatment. But while the "organic" view throws undoubted light on the laws of psychological process, there is real danger that it may obscure the issue when we come to deal with the more ultimate problems concerned; and it is his proneness to avail himself of ambiguities here that makes it impossible to class Lewes as a really first-rate thinker.

4. For philosophy, the primary question that needs an answer is, What do we mean by the "conscious" life, and how is

it connected with the physical body? Now the Utilitarians, whatever their deficiencies, did know what they meant by the "psychological" fact; it is doubtful whether Lewes does, and at least it is very difficult for his readers to discover. There are two sets of utterances, in particular, the attempt to reconcile which leads to a degree of confusion unusual even in philosophy. On the one hand is the idealistic claim that by the real is meant solely that which is given in feeling, all the distinctions recognized by thought being, not existent entities, but "aspects" within a feeling whole.<sup>1</sup> And this applies therefore to the crucial distinction between Self and not-Self; subject and object are not *really* separate, but are only logically distinguishable. On the other hand this "relativity" is given a more scientific expression through the assumption that, for subject and object, we may substitute organism and environment. When we put our thesis into this new terminology, it then appears that, with reference to the organism also, the object is not independent, but is only one aspect of a single fact; perception is not an *effect*, but an *assimilation* of the object by the organism, as nutrition is the assimilation of food.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, when we call the objective world a phenomenal aspect, it is not to be supposed that it is a falsification of reality. In perception, reality is only revealed to each man as an appearance; but it *is* to each what it appears as, or is felt to be.<sup>3</sup>

5. Now the last contention, to take this as a starting point, has a clear enough meaning so long as we keep strictly within a physical universe of discourse, and debar psychology and epistemology. Once accept the scientific fact of a physical organism in interaction with the surrounding world, and, in terms of process, the "neural tremors" *are* reality in that particular phase; they represent reality as it exists under the specific conditions of interaction described. But in what sense

<sup>1</sup> *Problems of Life and Mind*, 1st Series, Vol. II, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp 186, 189; Vol. II, p. 473.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p 192.

then are organism and object merely inseparable "*aspects*" of this neural process, and not factors apart from whose existence out of combination it never would have come about? The fact cannot be at the same time *both* that experience is the product of subject and object, and that these last are only aspects of experience; the two statements represent inconsistent ways of thinking, of which the first refers to the common-sense notion of interaction between organism and environment, and the latter to a more or less dubious metaphysical reinterpretation. If we overlook the two coöperating factors, and identify this particular causal process in the universe with "experience," within whose borders all the content of knowledge resides, it is inconceivable that we should ever arrive at the knowledge that it *is* a result, and of the conditions on which it depends. If we are confined to experience, and experience is intra-organic or neural, what right have we to talk of an external world on which this process, and ultimately the organism itself, depends? How do we pass from the object as the other side of the subject, to the object as a "larger circle which includes" the subject? <sup>1</sup> Nevertheless all the scientific verisimilitude that Lewes' philosophy possesses depends on taking the factors as actual agents, and not as aspects simply.

Lewes himself constantly recognizes this when he is speaking as a scientist; but he thinks to save his metaphysics by insisting that, although the physical stimulus has an existence out of relation to the organism, it still does not exist "in itself," but only in other relations.<sup>2</sup> Verbally this may appear at least to save the doctrine of relativity, though not without raising further problems. The claim that an object is *nothing but* relations is a form of words whose possession of any real meaning is open to question; does the statement that the independent object is "just the same objective factor in other relations" mean, for example, that it is the "relation to an organism"

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 195; Vol. II, p. 235.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 239.

in other relations? But in any case, these new relations have no connection with an organism, and so do not constitute "experience"; though science presupposes them nevertheless to be real, and even to be knowable. For if relations between objects outside the body are not what they are known to be, then science is impossible; or at best the only thing in the universe it could know would be the neural process. Of course *when* they are known they do come into connection with the organism; and Lewes has a chance to say that thus they become experience. But this again shifts the point of view; as experience they are only new cases of neural tremors, and we are as far as ever from the larger world of objects and processes of which the organism itself is only an infinitesimal part. That its power to produce effects in us is so much added knowledge of the object is of course true; but what Lewes started out to maintain was, that these relations to an organism, minus even the knowledge *that* they are effects, are the sole intelligible content of the word "real."

6. And now there is one further point that still more complicates the situation. So long as we are thinking in physical terms, we can at least interpret what we mean when we talk about a neural fact that is set up by the interaction of organism with environment, even though our right to postulate these last conceptions is obscure. But "experience" does not primarily suggest a "neural tremor." It means color-feeling, sound-feeling, pleasure and pain, emotion, logical process, and the like; and these have no resemblance to the physical organism and its activities. To accept a new kind of fact here would be however to nullify all of Lewes' scientific demands; accordingly he meets the difficulty by still another interpretation of subject and object as related "aspects." Instead of organism and environment being aspects of the unitary neural process, this entire process itself is now contrasted with a new definition of the "subject" as identified with immediate consciousness or

feeling, and the separation overcome by calling the two the concave and convex sides of a single reality.<sup>1</sup> The transition is eased by the word "sensibility." Sensibility, Lewes urges, is by everyone admitted to be a property of the physical organism,—which, if by sensibility we mean the "reaction of a neuro-muscular mechanism," or a power of response in the nervous system leading to self-protection, is entirely true.<sup>2</sup> But we are still as far as ever from the psychical in the sense in which this stands for something admittedly *not* like a physical movement or group of movements; and the fact that the *word* sensibility may also be used in the quite different sense of feeling and sensation, is no ground for supposing that the gap has been bridged between the two orders of existence. And Lewes' efforts to expound his meaning do not remedy the matter. His common habit is to regard the doubleness of aspect as due to the engagement of different sense organs. But this gives a precarious foundation for the claim that mental process is only another aspect of physical process. Both may be different appearances of the same unknown reality beyond the organism,—provided we have first gained the right to speak of this reality at all; but if the physical is to mean only certain optico-tactical sensations, it is no "other side" of feeling, but only one set of feelings among others within the psychical field.<sup>3</sup>

#### § 4. *Thomas Huxley*

1. The attitude of scepticism toward all "metempirical" beliefs which Lewes attempted to justify on the basis of sound scientific method, receives a simpler, and, partly for this reason, a much more striking expression in Thomas Huxley. The temperamental bias with which a naturalistic creed in modern times will usually be found associated, has in Huxley its perfect

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol I, pp 112, 119; Vol II, p. 459.

<sup>2</sup> Third Series, Vol II, pp 20, 38

<sup>3</sup> First Series, Vol. II, pp. 482 ff; Second Series, p. 351.



fruit. The one human virtue that for him overtops the rest,—and it is a virtue so rare, comparatively, that even an over-emphasis upon it may be excusable,—is intellectual honesty. “If you will accept the results of the experience of an old man who has had a very chequered existence,” he writes toward the close of his life, “there is nothing of permanent value,—putting aside a few human affections,—nothing that satisfies quiet reflection, except the sense of having worked, according to one’s capacity and light, to make things clear, and to get rid of cant and shams of all sorts. This was the lesson I learned from Carlyle’s book when I was a boy, and it has stuck by me all my life.” Sentiment, emotion, feeling—these may be very well in their place; but their place is certainly not to interfere with cool, clear, straightforward thinking. “My beliefs positive and negative,” he writes to Kingsley in reply to a note of sympathy on the death of his little son, “on all the matters of which you speak are of long and slow growth, and are firmly rooted. But the great blow which fell upon me seemed to stir them to their foundation, and had I lived a couple of centuries earlier I could have fancied a devil scoffing at me and them, and asking me what profit it was to have stripped myself of the hopes and consolations of the mass of mankind. To which my only reply was, and is: O Devil, truth is better than much profit. I have searched over the grounds of my belief, and if wife and child and name and fame were all to be lost to me one after another, still I would not lie.”

2. But now “truth” as it appeals to Huxley and to the scientific mind of which he is a spokesman, has, once more, a special and even technical character. Truth is that which can be experimentally tested. It is only as we go to the “great schoolmaster, experience,” that we get the kind of assurance on which we have a right to rely; “the man of science has learned to believe in justification, not by faith, but by verification.” Huxley is willing to admit, in theory, that even

science itself is open to speculative doubt. "If there is anything in the world which I do firmly believe in," he declares, "it is the universal validity of the law of causation; but that universality cannot be proved by any amount of experience, let alone that which comes to us through the senses." Philosophy, however, has prospered exactly in so far as it has disregarded such theoretical possibilities of doubt. The "great act of faith which leads us to take the experience of the past as a safe guide in our dealing with the present and the future," is justified by its fruits; to quarrel with the residual uncertainty that besets us in matters of science would be "about as reasonable as to object to live one's life with due thought for the morrow, because no man can be sure he will be alive an hour hence." But this assurance has no right to be extended beyond the field within which verification in detail is possible; it does not permit the scientist, any more than the theologian, to dogmatize about the ultimate nature of the world in which natural sequences occur. "The universe is, I conceive, like a great game being played out, and we poor mortals are allowed to take a hand. By great good fortune the wiser among us have made out some few of the rules of the game as at present played. We call them laws of nature, and honor them because we find that if we obey them we win something for our pains. The cards are our theories and hypotheses, the tricks our experimental benefactions. But what sane man would endeavor to solve the problem,—given the rules of the game and the winnings, to find whether the cards are made of pasteboard or of gold leaf?"

3. Huxley accordingly conceives that he is standing on a fundamentally different platform from that of the ordinary scientific materialist. Materialism asserts that matter and force are the only and the ultimate realities; "it seems to me pretty plain that there is a third thing in the universe, to wit, consciousness, which in the hardness of my heart or head I cannot see to be matter or force or any conceivable modifi-

cation of either." Indeed when we come to consider it, we see that so-called physical properties are themselves, as Berkeley pointed out, reducible to this third fact—conscious sensation. At times, accordingly, Huxley would seem to be headed irresistibly toward Berkeleian idealism. There is however a different way of looking at the matter, in its place equally plausible and necessary, which the scientist at least is unable to ignore. For its own purposes, physical science is bound to assume the objective existence of a material world; and from this angle consciousness is no longer the presupposition of matter, but its product. In the scientific sense, it is a function of the brain. It is, to be sure, an effect of a peculiar sort, in that there is no evidence that the nervous processes on their side need consciousness to explain their working. From the standpoint of science the human body is a mechanism fully accounted for in terms of physical law, and consciousness is only a collateral product of the action of the brain, as completely without influence in modifying its laws as the noise of the whistle that accompanies the work of a locomotive is without influence on its machinery. Nevertheless in spite of this one-sidedness, science is bound to regard consciousness as a causal product, which presupposes the prior existence of a physical basis.

Here then are two different starting points, both plausible in themselves, and yet leading to opposite conclusions; for purposes of scientific explanation it appears that sensation is a function of the motion of matter in the sensorium, while if we ask what we know about matter and motion, they in turn are merely a name for certain changes in the relations of our visual, tactile, and muscular sensations. And the conclusion is, that this should be a hint to us that we do not know the least thing in the world about how the matter ultimately stands. "You see," Huxley writes, "I am quite as ready to admit your doctrine that souls secrete bodies as I am the opposite one that bodies secrete souls,—simply because I deny the possi-

bility of obtaining any evidence as to the truth or falsehood of either hypothesis. My fundamental axiom of speculative philosophy is that *materialism and spiritualism are opposite poles of the same absurdity*—the absurdity of imagining that we know anything about either spirit or matter.” However for *practical* purposes the physical hypothesis is the more valuable alternative. For it connects thought with the other phenomena of the universe, and suggests inquiry into the nature of those physical conditions a knowledge of which may in the future help us to exercise the same sort of control over the world of thought as over the material world; whereas the other terminology is barren.

It may seem pertinent to ask why Huxley should have put himself to all the trouble then of arguing the cause of idealism, if in the end he admits that his results are theoretically doubtful and practically to be ignored. What is the good of philosophy, in other words, and why not have confined ourselves to science from the start? In the first place, Huxley replies, man is naturally a metaphysical animal, and you cannot keep him from thinking about such matters if you try. And in view of this there is a value to the inquiry, even if we come out with no positive results. “Of all the dangerous mental habits, that which schoolboys call ‘cocksureness’ is probably the most perilous,” and the inestimable value of metaphysical discipline is that it furnishes a counterpoise to this evil proclivity. “Metaphysical speculation follows as closely upon physical theory as black care upon the horseman”; for scientists to talk against it with no suspicion of the metaphysics hidden away in their own opinions, for them “with mouths full of the particular kind of heavily buttered toast which they affect, to inveigh against the eating of plain bread,” is to discredit themselves and science.

It follows that Huxley’s agnosticism is of a quite different brand from that of Spencer; it bases itself upon no theory of reality, but is, professedly, just a plea for sceptical caution

in the matter of belief. It is the "sanctification of doubt, the recognition that the profession of belief in propositions of the truth of which there is no sufficient evidence is immoral, the discrowning of authority as such, the repudiation of the confusion, beloved of sophists of all sorts, between free assent and mere piously gagged dissent, and the admission of the obligation to reconsider even one's axioms on due demand." Its maxims are, positively, in matters of the intellect follow your own reason as far as it will take you, without regard to any other consideration; negatively, in matters of the intellect do not pretend that conclusions are certain which are not demonstrated or demonstrable. For the agnostic, scepticism is the highest of duties, blind faith the unpardonable sin.

4. Technically, of course, the distinction between the materialist and the sceptic is a perfectly definite one. Nevertheless in his frequent complaints against the injustice of classifying him by the former title, it is difficult after all to avoid thinking that Huxley is a little disingenuous. There is no doubt a verbal difference between saying that matter alone is real, and saying that we take reality as material for working purposes only. But what actually separates the materialist from the spiritualist or idealist is less what he asserts than what he denies. "The longer I live," Huxley writes, "and the more I learn, the more hopeless to my mind becomes the contradiction between the theory of the universe as understood and expounded by the Jewish and Christian theologians, and the theory of the universe which is every day and every year growing out of the application of scientific methods to its phenomena. Whether astronomy and geology can or cannot be made to agree with the statements as to the matters of fact laid down in Genesis, whether the Gospels are historically true or not, are matters of comparatively small moment in the face of the impassable gulf between the anthropomorphism, however refined, of theology, and the passionless impersonality of the unknown and unknowable which science shows everywhere

underlying the thin veil of phenomena." Here obviously the fact that we cannot be sure what reality is like, is taken as interchangeable with our duty at any rate to reject confidently the supposition that it is spiritual or conscious. And in all its practically significant consequences, it is evident there is very little to choose between such a result and materialism.

In his profession of agnosticism here, Huxley has shown his usual genius for controversial debate in selecting his ground; the strategic position which he takes up is, of all forms of naturalism, the most difficult to meet directly. His opponents, who profess to have some positive theory which they are undertaking to approve to the reason, are of course bound by the rules of the game, and must meet all the assaults which a highly acute controversialist, with a mastery of crisp and ironic English, well knows how to make effective against so complex, and in a sense so personal a thing as a philosophy. But if he is held to account for his own metaphysics,—take, for example, the sheer contradiction that develops in his treatment of idealism,—he has only to decline politely to make himself responsible; he is not pretending at all, he declares, to set up a rival system. In such a position however there is logically one weak point. What the attitude amounts to in the end is scarcely more than this, that Huxley's temperament demands a particular kind of proof, short of which he refuses to be satisfied. I find the only tolerable amusement, so he tells us in a letter, practically in so many words, in intellectual problems which are capable of being definitely concluded and tested by experiment on concrete fact. I dislike the suspense of judgment and the uncertainty attaching to those more inconclusive reasonings that are too complicated, or abstract, or subtle, to admit of such a decisive test, and which remain always therefore in the class of moral probabilities simply. And *therefore* I decide that only to the first shall be given the name of truth; all else is excluded from the realm of profitable inquiry, and he who allows his belief to attach to it is a traitor

to the genuine spirit of truth seeking. But once put this in plain words, and it becomes evident that while it may be unanswerable from the standpoint of the one who actually feels that way about it, it is without compulsion for him whose desire to know happens not to be limited by such rigid requirements. Naturally this larger conception of truth will still need to be controlled by a feeling for rational probability; but so controlled, it would be distinctly the judgment of common sense that it is a proper extension of belief.

And the rational ground for this would be, that we do not in point of fact ever find any human being limiting his belief as Huxley would have him limit it. Even Huxley does not live up strictly to his own canons; since he was human, it would indeed be most surprising to find it otherwise. Reference has been made already to the distinction which he draws between experimental truths and those unproved postulates which experiment already presupposes—the law of causation in particular. Here we have one belief, at any rate, which is not dependent on, or settled by, a particular experiment, or any number of particular experiments. So, while for philosophy the existence of a physical world must always remain problematical, as a postulate demanded by the practical needs of science Huxley accords it credence. A similar extension of the right to believe appears everywhere in Huxley's ethical and social convictions, in spite of the fact that he expressly denies to this general field the quality of scientific truth. Nature clearly validates the larger and subtler ideals of human life in a manner much less exact than she validates a theory of biology or of physics, and faith, resting upon deep-seated preferences, plays a much larger part. Huxley's own belief in the supreme virtue of a love for truth is itself illustrative of a confidence dependent at least as much on the man Huxley, as on a reasoned review of the cases where lies and blunders have done injury to mankind; and it would not be difficult to find all through his political, economic, and

social creed, instances of strong and even passionate assurance where the tone of positiveness goes far beyond the scientific certainty of the objective proof.

5. Huxley's own dealing with ethical theory is comparatively slight, though there is an ethical undertone everywhere present to his naturalistic interest, which helps largely to lend it weight and impressiveness. As morality rests in a general way upon science, and a humble acceptance of the laws of nature, so science gets its final justification as the support not merely of our practical and industrial success, but of our whole social and ethical life as well. "I want the working classes," Huxley writes, "to understand that science and her ways are great facts for them,—that physical virtue is the base of all other, and that they are to be clean and temperate and all the rest not because fellows in black with white ties tell them so, but because these are plain and patent laws of nature which they must obey 'under penalties.'" "Cinderella," he writes again in an eloquent and famous passage, "is modestly conscious of her ignorance of these high matters. She lights the fire, sweeps the house, and provides the dinner; and is rewarded by being told that she is a base creature devoted to low and material interests. But in her garret she has fairy visions out of the ken of the pair of shrews who are quarreling downstairs. She sees the order which pervades the seeming disorder of the world; the great drama of evolution with its full share of pity and terror, but also with abundant goodness and beauty, unrolls itself before her eyes, and she learns in her heart of hearts the lesson that the foundation of morality is to have done, once and for all, with lying, to give up pretending to believe that for which there is no evidence, and repeating unintelligible propositions about things beyond the possibilities of knowledge. She knows that the safety of morality lies neither in the adoption of this or that philosophical speculation, or this or that theological creed, but in a real and living belief in that fixed order of nature which sends



social disorganization upon the track of immorality, as surely as it sends physical disease after physical trespasses. And of this firm and lively faith it is her high mission to be the priestess."

There is however one special side of Huxley's ethical philosophy, set forth in his famous essay on *Evolution and Ethics*, which might not seem entirely consistent with his usual conception of the relation of morality and nature, or with a faith in that "abundant goodness and beauty" of which he has spoken. And some inconsistency can in fact hardly be escaped, though it is not as serious as it might appear. Huxley is thinking now, not of the need to take account of the order of nature in the attainment of our conscious ends, but of the disposition, not uncommon among scientists themselves, to look to nature, or, more exactly, to the law of natural selection, as a pattern on which human morality is to be modelled; and this disposition Huxley strongly repudiates. "I am no pessimist, but also no optimist. Of moral purpose I see no trace in nature. This is exclusively of human manufacture—and very much to our credit." There are for the scientist two questions to be carefully distinguished. The first asks whether evolution accounts for morality,—whether, that is, we can discover the natural conditions out of which morality has evolved; and this of course the theory of evolution presupposes that we can do. The second is, Can the principle of evolution itself be adopted as an ethical principle? and this Huxley answers emphatically in the negative. Rather, in setting up an end and standard of its own, morality comes into sharp conflict with nature. Ethical progress depends, not on imitating the cosmic process, but on combating it; not on following passively its current, but on modifying this to our specifically human ends, by abolishing the sway of competitive self-interest, and substituting a subordination to the general welfare. In turning thus to the sphere of human life itself, instead of to deductions from cosmic processes, to find the content of moral law,

Huxley is a truer empiricist than, for example, Spencer; though here again it is open to question to what extent the results are obtained through the methods of experimental science and a scrutiny of the processes of nature, in separation from our tendency to accept on trust the human instincts that nature has implanted in us, and the attending sense of values.

§ 5. *Other Naturalistic Philosophers. Clifford. George Meredith. Naturalistic Ethics*

1. After Huxley, other representatives of naturalism can be passed over more lightly. Huxley's name is closely linked with that of Tyndall, who shared with him the obloquy,—without being averse, as Huxley was, to accepting the title,—of being branded as a materialist. But Tyndall's materialism is practically very much the same as Huxley's agnosticism. Matter for Tyndall loses all its "crassness," because he sees in it the possibility of whatever has actually made its appearance in the course of human events, all our philosophy, all our poetry, all our science, and all our art—Plato, Shakespeare, Newton, and Raphael—are potential in the fires of the sun. Interpreted thus, however, materialism has already broken its connection with the common notions of matter, if not indeed with science even, as a sober method of inquiry and a determinate group of laws in particular.

2. Another defender of the agnostic creed is Leslie Stephen, whose interest however lies not so much in promoting science as in a protest against the prevalent tendency among advocates of religion to sidestep the claims of intellectual honesty and plain speaking, and to cover up difficulties of belief with loose thinking and edifying evasions. The significance of the religious experience, very scantily recognized by Stephen, is set aside still more peremptorily by Grant Allen, a well-known popularizer of science who turned to novel writing for a living.

Here naturalism is completely stripped of the emotional accompaniments which sometimes had obscured and modified its normally secular and unideal character. Awe and reverence in contemplating the world of nature Allen declares that he had never felt. "The agnostic," an acquaintance remarked, "says, I don't know; Allen said, There is nothing to be known." "No emancipated man," he writes, "feels the need of aught to replace superstition"—religion, that is; "he gets rid of his bogies root and branch, and there the matter drops for him." Unless a man goes all the way with the biologists and anthropologists, Allen would rule him out of court at once; thus Carlyle is a "cheap imitation thinker," Browning a "smug optimist poet." There is one plain goal of knowledge. The end of man is to be happy, in reasonable ways of course, but in a perfectly direct and naturalistic sense uncomplicated by moral or spiritual subtleties. "The old asceticism said: Be virtuous and you will be happy; the new hedonism says: Be happy and you will be virtuous." Allen thus becomes the advocate of that aggressive form of individualism which proposes to throw off boldly all the restraints of an older and religious culture, as merely hampering our natural, and wholly unreprehensible, instincts.

3. Equally "materialistic," but with a wider basis of philosophy, is Henry Maudsley, a physician with scientific training, in whom the physician's tendency to look upon man as a complicated bodily machine provides the background for a caustic criticism of life and human nature, hardly stopping short of cynicism. In Maudsley, along with the other "ideals" with which nature, perhaps for our own good, deceives us, there tends to go also the ideal which English naturalism for the most part had held intact, and indeed had even clothed with something of the sanctity of religion—the peculiar virtue of intellectual honesty and truth-speaking. As the single mortal is inspired to live and strive in hope by his illusions, so may it be with the race of mortals; "instead of grieving that life is

so short and joy so transient, the wiser mind may lengthen life by putting into it as many illusions as possible, and enjoying them to the utmost while they last,—even perhaps, if so minded, by deliberately fostering the illusion in order to increase the pleasure of it.” So of the duties which a perception of truth is supposed to carry with it. The prevalence of an organized system of conventionalism, or so-called hypocrisy, may justly breed a suspicion of its necessity and usefulness. Its survival is plain proof that it has the right to survive in the nature of things; and prudence suggests profit out of the system by one who lives in it, rather than a doubtful attempt to reform it by self-martyrdom in standing out of or withstanding it. “To walk warily in the mean, so balancing between extremes as to guide well the going, is true wisdom of conduct.”

4. More important for philosophy, and, next to Huxley, the most intellectually significant, probably, of the scientists who espoused a naturalistic philosophy in the latter part of the century, is William Kingdon Clifford. Clifford was a brilliant young mathematician, whose zeal for “truth” is quite as uncompromising as that of Huxley; he who would deserve well of his fellows, Clifford writes, will “guard the purity of his belief with a very fanaticism of jealous care, lest at any time it should rest upon an unworthy object, and catch a stain which can never be wiped away.” Clifford’s notion of truth, however, does not turn out to be, either in theory or in practice, quite so sure of its meaning as in Huxley’s case. What he has in mind chiefly to protest against, indeed, is something no self-respecting thinker would care to defend—the willingness to nourish belief by suppressing doubts, and refusing to investigate the facts; the fundamental question as to what constitutes good evidence he leaves more obscure. And as a matter of fact his own favorite doctrines show a robust capacity for belief, and very positive conclusions are announced concerning matters of large scope on the basis of somewhat scanty

argument; whenever he himself wants badly enough to believe a thing, pragmatic reasons are resorted to without hesitation.

Clifford frankly turns to metaphysics to get the speculative satisfaction which Huxley was willing to forego. One outcome is his famous "mind-stuff" theory, which finds the true type of reality in the inner life of "feeling," and then extends this by analogy to the outer fact which appears phenomenally as the world of physical things. The identical bit of reality that I know as my own consciousness, my neighbor may perceive as nervous tissue; and since my brain is continuous with the entire physical environment, it is a plausible conjecture that the "real" world also is of a piece with the small section of it with which I am directly acquainted in my own psychical life. "Panpsychism" has had a considerable vogue since Clifford's day, and will receive more attention later; it is sufficient here to notice the particular character which in his hands it assumes. Instead of conceiving the world as a single comprehensive consciousness analogous to our own, as similar theories have sometimes done, Clifford thinks of conscious intelligence as existing only in connection with organisms; and he interprets evolution as the gathering up and unifying of what originally were separate and extremely simple bits of crude feeling, or mind-stuff. Clifford is not sorry to be able in this way to detach his philosophy from anything that looks like a religious background. There is always a touch of asperity in his references to religion, due apparently in large measure to his dislike of the clerical character; "I can find," he remarks in one place, "no evidence that seriously militates against the rule that the priest is at all times and in all places the enemy of all men."

What is essentially a religion, nevertheless, in the form of "cosmic emotion," Clifford himself brings back through the medium of another concept—that of Humanity. Clifford is one of the most eloquent champions of that notion of the "social consciousness" which affects increasingly the tone of natural-

istic thought in the latter part of the century. Even his epistemology rests upon the "social." Although in the mind-stuff theory the entire world of nature appears as having an existence—as mind-stuff—independent of the psychical contents of my knowing mind, and even, most of it, independent of the minds of other human beings, Clifford's explicit theory of knowledge starts from the traditional English doctrine that the "object" is only a group of my own sensations, the "externality" of the object being then interpreted as the recognition of a similarity of content in the minds of my social fellows.<sup>1</sup> This, it should be remarked, implies that at any rate the knowledge of another man's consciousness—what Clifford calls an "eject"—takes me beyond any sensation of my own; and from so strenuous a foe of unauthorized belief one is entitled to expect an explanation of our scientific right to this extremely convenient extension of our knowledge. Clifford is too much interested however in further consequences to stop for this. The consequences are those for ethics. If Society can give us our belief in the physical world, even more certainly is it the creator of the moral conscience. Conscience is the judgment of the "tribal self" on the individual self, the voice of Man within us commanding us to work for Man. It grows out, not of individual, but of social experience, and has to do with the survival of the tribe as a tribe in the struggle for existence. Accordingly the moral end, or virtue, is not my greatest happiness; it is not altruism even, or the doing good to others as individuals. It is increased efficiency as a citizen, the service of society by a member of it, who loses in that service the consciousness that he is anything different from the community itself. Here Clifford is apt to leave the impression that it is a gospel rather than a scientific theory which he is promulgating; in the end his philosophy grows almost lyrical, and humanity fuses with the notion of cosmic reality to form a new object of devotion. "From the dim dawn of History

<sup>1</sup> *Lectures and Essays*, Vol. II, pp. 52 ff.

and from the inmost depth of every soul, the face of our Father Man looks out upon us with the fire of eternal youth in his eyes, and says, Before Jehovah was, I am." In place of the personal immortality of religion, the fancy of another life "monstrous or supernatural, whose cloudy semblance shall be eked out with the dreams of uneasy sleep, or the crazes of a mind diseased," we are to put the nobler thought of identity with a communal Life "wider and greater, that shall live when we as units shall have done with living."

5. Even more fervid than Clifford in his anticipations of a new dispensation is William Winwood Reade, whose strange and powerful book, the *Martyrdom of Man*, had an influence on not a few of his contemporaries. Reade also was inspired by a profound antipathy to religion, and a profound faith in science as destined to be the means of a regenerated race. With the weapons of science disease will be exterminated, men will make their way to distant planets, will master the forces of nature, will become themselves architects of systems and manufacturers of worlds. Man then will be perfect; he will be what the vulgar worship as a God. But Man, who thus "invents immortality," is not to be identified with particular, private men, those "dots of animated jelly." There is only one Man upon the earth; what we call men are not individuals, but components; what we call death is merely the bursting of a cell; wars and epidemics are merely inflammatory phenomena incident on certain stages of growth. "If we look at the life of a single atom . . . all appears to be cruelty and confusion; but when we survey mankind as One, we find it becoming more and more noble, more and more divine, slowly ripening towards Perfection." To sink our private ambitions in the good of the race, to place our hope in the happiness of posterity, and our faith in the perfectibility of man, is the new religion which is to take the place of the old.

6. This growing emphasis on humanity, with its attendant note of emotion, in contrast with the cooler and more indi-

vidualistic temper of Utilitarianism, is due in considerable measure to the influence on English thought of the French philosopher Comte. Although the two strains merge in J. S. Mill, in general they are separate enough to lend a distinctive character to the positivistic naturalism of the latter part of the century. One vein here is struck in the personal creed of George Eliot; it is relatively not a common one however, and has its evident source in special peculiarities of temperament. None of the Utilitarians had been wont to take very seriously the pleasure doctrine in their private scheme of existence; in George Eliot the very word tends to disappear. "All the serious relations of life become so much more real indeed," she writes in a letter; "pleasure seems so slight a thing, and sorrow and duty and endurance so great." In a world in which the "difficulty of the human lot" is that which of all things is most perfectly known to us, man's highest calling and election is to "do without opium, and live through all our pain with conscious, clear-eyed endurance." And this same note of weariness, of low vitality, pervades even the ideal of service to Humanity which remains as the one positive motive to give significance to human living. "I try," she writes, "to take delight in the sunshine that will be when I shall never see it any more,"—a poor substitute, most men are likely to feel, for the possibilities of realized good in the present, especially when the reasons seem so doubtful for expecting future generations to make any greater success of an enterprise that hitherto has shown nothing but failure.

This subdued and despondent mood is, however, altogether foreign to the more typical positivist. Whatever fault he may have to find with the present world,—and of its intellectual merits at any rate he has a low opinion,—there never is any question that a brilliant future is about to dawn. By some of the closer disciples of Comte a Positivist Church was formed in England, concerning which great hopes for a time were entertained. Richard Congreve, who was largely influ-



ential in starting the movement, was a Comtian of almost evangelical fervor and orthodoxy; younger associates of Congreve are Robert Bridges, James Cotter Morison, and, in particular, Frederic Harrison, the best known and most prolific of the group. In Harrison the peculiarities of Comte's autocratic and dogmatic temper appear in a much subdued form, and the religion of Humanity, interpreted as morality fused with social devotion, and enlightened by sound philosophy, becomes a persuasive call to brotherhood based on human rather than on supernatural sanctions. It may be questioned, however, whether the devotional tinge that still attaches to the "organic" notion of the human race can maintain itself indefinitely against its naturalistic background, or whether the admonition habitually to make of this a "converging point of one's whole existence, thoughts, feelings, and labor," is not calculated to encourage the sort of idealistic sentimentalism which Sir James Stephen found so distasteful.

7. In English positivism, the naturalistic background tends on the whole to be somewhat overlaid with ethical humanitarianism. One further and important representative of a purer form of naturalism, in whom "cosmic emotion" is made to center less on Humanity, and more on the natural conditions of man's life, is George Meredith, in whose verse it receives a specially felicitous expression. Here, along with an insistence on the faith that the whole content of human life is rooted in our "Mother Nature"—Earth,—and achieves nothing but unreality and self-defeat when it tries to separate itself from her bosom, there goes also a strong dislike for the pedestrian and utilitarian qualities of commonplace materialism, and a sustained glow of feeling through which the real is itself transmuted into the ideal, losing its grossness without endeavoring to make its escape to a different and "higher" realm. Meredith would hold his way equally between "the unreal and the over-real which delight mankind"; the noble enthusiasms—art, humanity, justice—he would hold to and exalt, while rest-

ing them on the normal processes of nature. The Earth is not dead matter; it is the living mother of us all. And man is nature's great achievement; in man's brain, the powers of nature are focussed and become self-conscious.

She conscient, she sensitive, in him;  
With him enwound, his brave ambition hers;  
By him humaner made, by his keen spurs  
Pricked to race past the pride in giant limb,  
Her crazy adoration of big thews.

So man on his side too must recognize himself as a product of natural conditions. All the hopes and aspirations that seem to free him from earth's limitations are in reality her own work in him; if man

aloft for aid  
Imploring storms, her essence is the spur.  
His cry to heaven is a cry to her  
He would evade.

And as he sees more clearly, as his intellect matures and comes to take command over the heart and the imagination, he will learn to limit his desires to what earth has to offer, and give up his unfounded dreams. The "ideal" which is the glorified heritage of earth is thus no vague emotional yearning, no creation of the heart "untamed to tone its passions under thought." Intellect is man's addition to the sum of things; and clear-seeing intellect is the first requirement of the ideal life for its successful career. This has its interpretation and expression in Meredith's notion of the function of Comedy. Comedy—"sword of Common Sense"—is just the criticism of human life through the use of the intellect. "The source of his wit," he writes of Moliere, "is clear reason: it is a fountain of that soil; and it springs to vindicate reason, common-sense, rightness and justice." To dissipate the inveterate disposition of men to live in a "hazy atmosphere that they suppose an ideal one," and to bring ideals back into connection with the fact, is for Meredith the great aim of Comedy.

8. One field of naturalistic effort remains to be dealt with a little more fully here—that of a scientific theory of ethics. In addition to those already mentioned, there are several further independent essays at an evolutionary and positivistic treatment of the moral life. One of these, which has points of affinity with Meredith's philosophy, is a volume entitled *Natural Law* by Edith Simcox,—a book of considerable distinction as well as logical power. Here hedonism and utilitarianism are relegated to a subordinate place, in favor of a naturalistic version of the perfectionist ideal, motivated by a somewhat austere æsthetic admiration of "conformity to type." True "good-for-man" is determined by the natural forces which in their development have issued in the human organism, and which at the same time have moulded subjective feelings that instinctively approve the resulting handiwork. The norm to which natural evolution has thus affixed the sense of approval is action "after our kind," as imperfection and vice are a departure from the class type; the end of life is the making of oneself as fine a specimen of humanity as possible, through the development and exercise of the greatest number of natural faculties in their fullest possible perfection. Meanwhile however it is to be remembered that forces from behind, in the natural world, not inducements ahead of us, are what most fundamentally condition virtue; so that even "perfection," to say nothing of pleasure, is not the motive, but is only a formulation of the natural law that really moves us. It is perhaps a fair question to ask of such a philosophy why, even granting that the long pressure of events has created an admiration for the ideal of "typical" man, this particular approval feeling should possess any advantage over other admirations. Any ideal, if it exists, must have the same source in evolution as any other; and the naturalist has no apparent ground for picking out his own pet ideal as nature's end, apart from the fact that he has an individual preference for it—which is no longer Science. And there are other moods

in which our moral feeling is more likely to be found in protest against the demand that we identify ourselves "with the supreme tendency of the universe to exist as it does." Nevertheless a feeling for the dignity of the actual, and for the claim which existing fact makes upon the will, is a genuine feeling, though it may need to be supplemented and corrected; and a Spinozistic ideal of duty as the "active coöperation of the individual with all the real forces of the universe, in proportion to their reality," and of religion as a devout and affectionate acquiescence in this nature of essential being, is capable of some edifying power, and much æsthetic charm.

9. Another essay at reconstructing ethical theory by placing it upon a "scientific" basis, is the youthful work of Alfred Barratt,—a sketchy attempt to reduce ethical conduct to the fundamental properties of animal tissue, and the ultimate basis of morals to a reasonable obedience to the physical laws of nature. Much less narrowly biological in tone is S. Alexander's *Moral Order and Progress*, where the essence of morality is found in the concept of "equilibrium." Of most importance however in this connection is Leslie Stephen's *Science of Ethics*. Here an evolutionary morality receives perhaps its most thoughtful and judicious formulation. Starting with the assumption that "good" means everything that favors happiness, Stephen proceeds to modify historic Utilitarianism in several ways. To begin with, it is not future pleasure which determines choice, but the present pleasurable of the idea,—the pleasantest judgment, rather than the judgment of what is pleasantest. Consequently there is no guarantee that a man will choose what he himself knows intellectually is for his greatest ultimate good. Nor does it follow that because an act is determined by a man's own feeling, the end is his own happiness. Stephen agrees with Spencer that science demands a more objective standard than feeling supplies; and he looks for this in the same general direction, through the application of biology to the conception of a social organism. Among

the characteristics of human nature, there are some which may intelligibly be said to be self-regarding, and independent of society, in the sense in which an apple, though it could not exist apart from the tree, may vary in color while the relation to the tree remains approximately constant. But we may also distinguish other characters in man which are due primarily to the presence of opinions and feelings in the minds of his fellows, and which vary therefore directly with changes in other parts of the social body. Apart from this social relationship, accordingly, such characters would be unintelligible; and by virtue of his possession of them the individual is to be interpreted, not as a separate unit, but as "social tissue."

Now morality has to do with conduct in so far as it is thus influenced by the pressure of the community, acting for ends that do not have the individual as such in view; and therefore its "law" is to be looked for outside the realm of private feeling. Given a certain character or type of organization, the agent does what gives him pleasure; but if you ask how he came to have this character, you must refer to conditions of existence that are not deducible from the nature of the unit which has been shaped by them. We need accordingly in explaining morality to go beyond pleasure, to the objective circumstances which render a certain form of organization successful, and able to hold its place in the evolutionary process; that in the individual is "good" which constitutes him vigorous social tissue,—which fits him, that is, to play his part in a society capable of surviving in the struggle for existence. Health, power and persistence, social vitality, the maximum total efficiency,—this, not happiness, represents the true moral criterion; the moral law of goodness and duty is a statement of the conditions essential to the vitality of the social system. It is true that since pleasure normally attaches to a state of equilibrium, there is bound to be an approximate coincidence of pleasure and of health. But the coincidence is not complete; and pleasure calculation cannot be wholly depended on

therefore even for the momentary judgment. Even if it be true that we wish for health merely as a means of pleasure, the only comprehensive rule for obtaining pleasure is to secure this general condition. And meanwhile human nature is not a constant, but a variable, whose modification is the primary aim of the moralist. And for the comparison of different types of organization, the pleasure criterion is useless; since happiness itself changes as society develops, we cannot compare two societies at different stages as if they were more or less efficient machines for obtaining an identical product. Utility in the sense of life-preserving, then, is more fundamental than utility in the sense of pleasure-giving. Evolution guarantees the approximation of the two, but not their identity. What it postulates is only that man will acquire instincts that fit him for the general conditions of life; and in particular cases it is quite possible this may cause him to be more miserable than if he were without them.

But while the cause of moral conduct is thus to be found in social utility, it does not follow that this is the end which men have consciously in view. In the process of evolution instinctive feelings of disgust or admiration arise which act independently of any conscious perception of utility, and which, as society grows more reasonable, develop into the approval of a certain sort of character. The ultimate form of the moral law is, in consequence, *Be* this, rather than, *Do* this; and such a shift of emphasis is itself "useful" as the sign of the highest organized type, since a rule for conduct can be laid down far more simply and exhaustively in terms of the inner disposition that leads to action, than in terms of a multitude of varying external acts. The Utilitarian principle presupposes, then, a problem which is solved through the generating of a type so constituted that evils perceived are intrinsically hateful to it, without calling for an explicit recognition of their consequences. In the moral sentiment, Stephen finds sympathy largely implicated, as the Utilitarians generally had done.

His theory of sympathy, however, has a touch of novelty. Sympathy is involved, that is, in the very possibility of knowing other persons. To be acquainted with the inner life of my neighbor I must possess already the means of interpreting it through feelings of my own; and I cannot therefore properly know what he feels, without *feeling* what he feels, finding my pleasure and pain in common with him therefore, and so becoming part of a larger whole which determines to this extent the law of my nature.

§ 6. *Evolution and Religion. Browning*

1. The theory of evolution did not, of course, carry with it everywhere naturalistic consequences. In spite of the early odium which it excited, there was not lacking from the start a disposition even among men of a religious temper to accept it, as a matter of fact and of science, without giving up their religious convictions. Thus among the physiologists William B. Carpenter, a great name in his day, still held firmly to his Unitarian faith; by restoring to the notion of causation the older idea of dynamic power, he was able to argue for the necessity of a God behind material phenomena, to whose creative will their physical potencies are due, while still leaving the actual course of events to be determined by scientific investigation. It is true there was a tendency in many quarters to limit to some extent the scientific possibilities of evolutionary theory. Even Wallace, the co-discoverer with Darwin of natural selection, denied its ability to explain certain facts of man's psychical life, such as the mathematical and musical faculties; though it is not perfectly clear whether he thought that an adequate explanation here would compel us to look beyond the realm of natural causes altogether. In the case of others who accepted the principle of development in the large, the disposition is explicit to suppose that breaks occur in the

evolutionary process which involve genuine new beginnings, more particularly in connection with the appearance of life, of consciousness, and of the higher forms of consciousness such as reason and the moral conscience. A vigorous representative of this latter attitude is the Catholic naturalist St. George Mivart; reason, in particular, is for Mivart a new departure which sharply separates man from the brutes, and without which, as a source of ultimate and self-evident truths, the whole basis and possibility of science itself would disappear.

2. A typical attempt to show the consistency of evolutionary theory with a religious background, is that of John Fiske, whose Concord lectures on religious philosophy had, deservedly, a wide reading. Fiske was a thoroughgoing disciple of Spencer, and his first venture in philosophy was a resumé of the Spencerian doctrine. Even in this early volume there is a disposition to interpret the Unknowable in a manner less rigorous that might appear to be its meaning on the surface, through the recognition of an implicit reasonableness in nature, and an underlying kinship between man and the eternal Energy, which renders it not improper to assign to this last in some vague sense a quasi-personal form. Later Fiske added the more explicit conception of an immanent teleology, with man, and the higher human qualities, as the end toward which development has been tending. In proof of this he cites the fact that nature's efforts at this point turn from the creation of new organs, to the development of intelligence and consciousness, intelligence more and more taking in charge the course of progress even in the environing world, and altruistic sympathy progressively reducing the scope of the struggle for existence. In this revelation of purpose Fiske finds the suggestion also of an immortal destiny for man. Such a form of teleology he thinks does not compete with science, since divine action is now identified with orderly action, and not contrasted with it. Teleology is a dramatic tendency which we discover empirically in the evolutionary process as a whole, and does



not profess to supply an explanation of anything in detail; all the scientific difficulties have arisen from the conception of an Augustinian or external deity, and have no application to a God conceived as immanent in the world, and its animating power. Fiske's conclusions are rather too facile to be always clear to analysis; thus the sense in which we have a right to clothe God in human attributes—and so to make him knowable—is left pretty much in the dark by the claim that he is “quasi”-personal and quasi-psychical. But as a popularizer of what may be said to meet the commonplaces of a scientific criticism of purpose, Fiske has had few equals.

3. Another American scientist with religious interests, who also brings a considerable gift for philosophizing to the appraisal of the evolutionary process, is Joseph Le Conte. Le Conte has a very similar doctrine of the immanency of God in nature; but he is more specific in defining his meaning. It is not that spirit is at work in a universe of matter. The natural world *is* God's life, and its laws are his direct activity; the phenomena of nature are objectified modes of divine thought, and natural forces are forms of the divine will. Man's own spirit is a spark of this divine energy individuated, by a process of evolution which passes through a line of lower psyches to the point of self-consciousness; here it not only becomes separated from nature and capable of an independent life, but it enters into a new relationship to God, who now operates, not by natural law, but by a revelation to the reason and the conscience. The ultimate difficulties in the way of such an attempt to combine pantheism with independent human personality, Le Conte has in the end to meet by an appeal to the limitations of human reason.

4. One other name is of interest here because it represents a conversion to the religious hypothesis from the extreme naturalistic camp. George Romanes is one of the ablest of the biological psychologists, whose most important work is a detailed endeavor to show the possibility of explaining the

life of intelligence in evolutionary terms. In early life Romanes had published anonymously an uncompromising argument in behalf of atheism. But he later came to believe that a place for design may still be found if we shift from the narrow basis of special adaptations to the broad area of nature as a whole; when we ask the question, How is it that all physical causes have conspired by their united action to the production of a general order of Nature? there is some ground for the rational conclusion that there must be a cause for this coöperation of causes. A more general basis, obscurely defined, not only for theistic but for Christian belief, in the form of special moral and spiritual instincts different from the organs of knowledge in the proper or scientific sense, is suggested in the unfinished notes of what was to have been a book entitled *A Candid Examination of Religion*.

5. There remains a very miscellaneous group of names, where the interest also centers about the notion of science in its relation to religion or the spiritual life, which this is perhaps as good a place as any to refer to briefly. From the standpoint of a Christian believer the Duke of Argyle is the author of various writings, of which the *Reign of Law* is the best known. The thesis of the book, which has no scientific value, is that the supernatural should properly be defined, not as that which works without natural means, but as a use of natural means such as lies beyond human knowledge, or beyond human power to effect. And by conceiving law in terms of a multitude of active entities or "forces" existing in the universe, each "necessary" and resisting all attempts to violate it, but capable of being "overruled" by other laws, or of combining with them to produce such results as a controlling agent may desire, design, and special Providence, and miracle even, are supposed to have shown their compatibility with the demands of science and the universal reign of Law. A book also addressed to the task of vindicating Christianity in the eyes of science is Henry Drummond's *Natural Law in*

*the Spiritual World.* Drummond was a successful inspirational lecturer before evangelical audiences; and he assumes that all that is needed in order to legitimize to the modern mind the religious concepts of the spiritual life,—which he thinks sufficiently defined by the vague notion of “life in Christ” as understood by evangelical religion,—is to point to spiritual “laws” comparable to the scientific laws of nature. The discovery of various analogies between scientific concepts and the current interpretation of Christian experience is used to show that the two realms have an organic unity. Another book by Drummond, the *Ascent of Man*, proposes to correct the one-sidedness of the current scientific interpretation of natural selection, or the Struggle for Life, by identifying this with the struggle for food, and then finding the source of spiritual and moral values in another aspect of nature’s processes, in the shape of a sentimentalized version of Reproduction, or the Struggle for the Life of Others.

6. In a quite different vein is a volume which, at the close of the century, also received for a time wide acclaim as an evolutionary justification of religion. Benjamin Kidd’s *Social Evolution*, the most successful representative of a not infrequent tendency among the sociologists to combine an effect of very rigorous scientific method with some of the characteristics of the romantic drama, is a defence of the thesis that religion is a non-rational factor,—there is no such thing as a “rational religion,”—which is essential to the possibility of progress. The thesis presupposes various dogmas which it is not thought necessary to justify,—in particular, that progress is primarily a matter of natural selection in the interests of the race, that it necessitates therefore a constant conflict with the interests of the individual man in the present and his unwilling subordination to future generations, and that human reason is nothing but an instrument devoted to securing these personal interests of the individual. It follows that a man can find no “rational” justification for plunging into a deadly struggle which will

only benefit generations still unborn. And if therefore progress is not to be slain by the weapon it has itself brought into existence, the intellect must be held in check by some force not as such intellectual or rational; and this it seems is precisely the rôle we find religion playing in history. An interesting part of the argument is its interpretation of the rôle of altruism. This the evolutionists had commonly regarding as checking the universal struggle. Kidd holds that it renders it in reality more intense, by destroying artificial lines of caste, and so bringing all men alike, under something like an equality of conditions, into the competitive arena; and it does this primarily by weakening the resisting power of the possessing classes through lessening their morale, and thus rendering them more vulnerable to attacks from below.

7. One further application of the notion of evolution to a philosophy of the spiritual life, though here we leave behind altogether the peculiar interests of science, is to be found in the poetry of Robert Browning. Browning's interest in philosophy may indeed easily be exaggerated. What he really cares most about is the drama of human life and character, the inner adventures of the soul, and the emotional crises in which the significance of our deeds comes home to us most closely and vividly. Browning's distinctive concern for emotion is thus not for its own sake as the end and justification of living; neither is he engaged in a merely psychological display of its inner anatomy as a fact of natural history. What interests him is the inner logic of emotion, the self-revealing and world-revealing character it bears. The emotion is significant as a stage, a moment, in the forward push of life; and so it is emotion intellectualized, and made to serve as a rational guide for conduct.

In certain general consequences of this Browning's own philosophy may be said to consist. What most directly follows is the conception of life as a probation. As emotion is the sort of experience in which we are made to realize under

the stress of some critical and revealing situation our real drift, and the worth or emptiness of the ends we have been pursuing, it is always a step to new possibilities, and so it reveals life in its character not as a finished attainment, but as a preparation for something still to come more adequate to the capacities of human nature. For the healthy and normal soul this justifies the forward look needed to give hopeful interest and zest to a future in which "the best is yet to be"; for the soul that has squandered its powers it offers the chance that comes from the realization of failure, since even death may be the great final moment of self-revelation, and so the transfer to that realm

Where God unmakes but to remake the soul  
He else first made in vain.

Hence too the insistence upon a divine discontent as the saving salt of life; upon the peril of dull acquiescence and stagnation; upon the demand that we welcome failure that comes from setting our aims too high, rather than "vulgarly in the low aim succeed"; upon the preferableness of an experiment even in wrong-doing—since this at least affords a chance for learning the lessons of experience—to a negative blamelessness that is due to cowardice or inertia.

8. One specifically doctrinal form to which this leads in Browning is his belief in immortality. Immortality is fundamental for him because it is needed to give scope, and an applicability to things in the long run, to his attitude toward experience. It is in dealing with this belief that Browning is most explicitly the philosopher. The same motive is also fundamental in a second main article of his creed—his strong faith, amounting to practical certainty, that life "means intensely and means good." This confidence itself is not the result of argument, and is indeed seldom directly argued about; it is already implicit in that sense of the significance and interestingness of life which is at the root of his activity as a

poet. Indirectly however it leads again to philosophy through the need of giving some standing to the fact of evil. Here also it is to the probationary character of life that Browning turns. While his optimism is far from ignoring the facts of evil, it cannot be said that evil constitutes for him the stumbling-block which the modern thinker so often has found it. His tone toward it is seldom apologetic; rather it appeals to him on its positive side as a means of grace, a rebuff to be welcomed because it calls forth in us the exercise of powers that otherwise might have lost their chance. Indeed God himself would be limited without the power to suffer, and man through the possibility of self-sacrifice would be superior to his Maker; hence the peculiar religious importance of the doctrine of the Incarnation.

To the mind which likes to place our present mixed world alongside an imaginary state of perfection, and then lament the contrast, this treatment of evil will probably seem to make too little of the ugly facts. But it is not certain that the failure in realism might not be retorted against the objector. Much current invective against the hard-heartedness of God or nature, which supposes itself, in opposition to a foggy and sentimental optimism, peculiarly sympathetic, clear-seeing, and unprejudiced, is vitiated in a measure by the tendency, typically unscientific, to mass the facts and trust to their collective emotional appeal, instead of disentangling and estimating them in detail in their concrete setting. Browning's contention is, in effect, that if you want to know what evil is you must watch it actually at work; and in doing this you discover, not by deduction from the general principle that a particular evil may be a universal good, but by its actual consequences in this or that man's life, that it may, if we so will, be put to account, and that "sudden the worst turns best for the brave." And it is in the strong man's attitude, rather than the weakling's, that we get the best evidence for the genuine character of the real world.

9. There is one further and more general deduction from Browning's way of viewing life. It follows from his whole outlook that feeling is a valid clue to the character of reality, when safeguarded by a cautious self-criticism through the intellect. Browning repudiates the claims of reason in its traditional form. He will not allow that man can attain to more than proximate and probable knowledge, or that in logic he possesses other than an imperfect and tentative instrument. Indeed a complete insight is not desirable even; the finer products of human experience, as a constant growth and endeavor, could not thrive if the whole issue were fully grasped, and "guesses turned to knowledge absolute." Reason must be helped out by those less articulate clues to meaning that are to be found in man's inner spiritual life. In appealing to emotional sources of truth Browning is cautious and moderate. We have in feeling no mystical insight that does away with the need for thoughtful interpretation and cautious judgment. But that in the higher reaches of man's experience, more especially in the fact of human love, we do come in contact with what is too self-evidently fundamental to be excluded from our ultimate philosophy as a mere episode and irrelevance in the universe, Browning is thoroughly persuaded.

It is in love that Browning comes nearest to getting beyond the thoroughgoing temporalism to which the logic of his position might seem to point him,—the substitution of eternal effort, namely, for achievement. The natural mind will always view with suspicion an ideal which postpones fulness of satisfaction to an everlasting striving, which would not be striving did it not contain the seeds of discontent; there must be victory as well as the excitement of the fray. And for this two ways are open. Either we must repudiate growth as a final ideal, and look to the time when growth ceases and rest supervenes upon it; or else in changing experience itself there must be some quality of perfect attainment. Knowledge, for Browning at any rate, cannot serve for this; finished knowledge is

impossible in fact, and if it were possible it would need a finished world. Somewhere in the life of feeling the goal must exist if it exists at all. There are various directions in which philosophy has looked for this,—in religion, for example, or in art. With at least an equal right Browning finds the ultimate and satisfying experience in love,—that comprehensive emotional relationship which opens up the possibility of a settled sense of good not only in the midst of the changing circumstances of life, but by very reason of this change, since fellowship implies, not fixed conditions, but a constant interplay of action. For the intellect

The prize is in the process, knowledge means  
Ever renewed assurance by defeat,  
That victory is somehow still to reach;  
But love *is* victory, the prize itself.



## CHAPTER V

### ABSOLUTE IDEALISM

#### § 1. *Transcendentalism in Literature. Carlyle. Emerson*

1. The conflict between science and religion so much talked about in the latter part of the century, and to which a brief reference has already been made in the preceding chapter, resulted in what may fairly be called a draw. On the one side science achieved its main object. It no longer is necessary that it should fight for the privilege of pursuing its own distinctive work unhampered by vested intellectual interests; nowadays science moves freely and without hindrance, and indeed at times with something of a swagger. On the other hand, the establishment of a purely naturalistic creed as the necessary basis for this immunity cannot be said to have had a similar success. Naturalism found itself opposed with growing confidence by rival philosophies, which proposed to reinterpret the universe in various way to vindicate its spiritual meaning, while also taking care to avoid any clash with such results as science proper might affirm. In general these efforts fall into two classes. The first does not depart very widely from the traditional attitude of English philosophy, and so, in spite of disagreements, it can meet and contend with naturalism on something like a common metaphysical ground. The second is equally concerned, from the standpoint of an interest which, at the start at least, was definitely religious, to show the deficiencies of the naturalistic creed; but it proceeds in a much more drastic way through a reconstruction of the whole theory of knowledge and of reality, so that incidentally its criticism

is almost as hostile to the current forms of theism as to naturalism. This English adaptation of German Idealism attracted during the last quarter of the century a large proportion of the best speculative intellect of England and America, attaining in the universities a dominance that for a time was almost complete.

2. Before taking it up however in its technical form, certain more popular expressions of what is in part the same idealistic tendency deserve to be noticed more briefly. In England, the chief representative of this is Thomas Carlyle. The root of what is most characteristic in Carlyle may be traced in the first instance to his peculiarly active and deep-lying sense of the mystery of this "strangest of all possible worlds." For him the universe is not "a warehouse, or at best a Fancy Bazaar, but a mystic Temple and Hall of Doom." Consider that most common and familiar of facts, the fact of time. "Rough Samuel and sleek wheedling James *were* and *are not*," he writes in the review of Boswell. "Their Life and whole personal Environment has melted into air. The Mitre Tavern still stands in Fleet Street; but where now is its scot-and-lot paying, beef-and-ale loving, cocked-hatted, pot-bellied Landlord; its rosy-faced, assiduous Landlady, with all her smiling brass-pans, waxed tables, well-fitted larder-shelves; her cooks and boot-jacks and errand-boys, and watery-mouthed hangers-on? Gone! gone! The becking Waiter who, with wreathed smiles, was wont to spread for Samuel and Bozzy their supper of the Gods, has long since pocketed his last sixpence, and vanished, sixpences and all, like a ghost at cock-crowing. . . . Of the Mitre Tavern nothing but the bare walls remain; of London, of England, of the World, nothing but the bare walls remain; and these also decaying (were they of adamant), only slower. The mysterious River of Existence rushes on; a new billow thereof has arrived, and lashes wildly as ever around the old embankments; but the former Billow, with *its* loud, mad eddyings, where it it? Where!"

There is however something more to add to this, which with Carlyle is all-important. No soul can long nourish itself on blank wonder. But the life that is to inform this wonder-provoking universe must come, not from without, where mystery alone lies, but from within. The human conscience, the perception of the infinite difference between right and wrong, is the clue to the understanding of this blind world; the knowledge to which Carlyle summons man is the knowledge which has to do with his *duty*. Theoretical knowledge is a very different matter. We know that the world is a righteous world, and that its laws are the laws of eternal justice; but we know this as an affair of the heart and not of the head. To attempt to prove the existence of God is like lighting a lantern to look for the sun; intellectual reasonings lead at best only to a "great, unintelligible Perhaps," which is almost worse than scepticism. But such a lack of speculative understanding is no real ground of complaint; the end of man is an Action, and not a Thought. The first duty of man, then, is insight into this underlying moral structure of the world. For Carlyle, this was the condemnation of the ruling philosophy of the day,—Benthamism, materialism, empiricism, under whatever name it might pass. Instead of going from within outward, it was trying to start from the outer facts as if they were the realities; men had lost their faith in the invisible, and believed and hoped and worked only in the visible. "The scientist walks through the land of wonders unwondering, like a wise man through some huge, gaudy, imposing Vauxhall, whose fireworks, cascades, and symphonies the vulgar may enjoy and believe in, but where he finds nothing real but the saltpetre, pasteboard and catgut." The outcome is atheism and negation, and negation is no proper attitude of the human spirit; belief is the healthy act of a man's mind, not doubt. It was God that said, Yes; it is the Devil that forever says, No.

3. Carlyle's "moral idealism," as a protest alike against a mechanical philosophy of science, and the crudities of current

supernaturalism, had a profound effect which has not yet entirely disappeared. But even in this brief statement there are visible certain elements of weakness. There is a kind of intellectual activity whose value Carlyle never was able to appreciate. The mere attempt to think clearly without for the moment reference to the emotional bearings of our argument, the critical analysis of ideas and beliefs whose outcome may seem only negative, the endeavor to bring our opinions calmly and without prejudice into comparison and discover what inconsistencies they may show,—this is an altogether necessary sort of work that some one has to do. But Carlyle was a prophet, not a logician; and to him nothing seemed worth while that could not instantly be called into service to enforce some moral lesson. A measure of justification may readily be found for him. It was inevitable that in a transition period the new interest in mechanism should be over-emphasized, to the neglect of the motives and ends that make mechanism worth while; and Carlyle did well to recall the thoughts of men to a more positive basis. He is right in urging that the beginning and the end of conduct is belief—positive, spontaneous, and in a sense unconscious of itself; “in all vital action Nature’s manifest purpose and effect is, that it should go on for the most part below the surface, that like the peptic countryman we should never know that we have a system.” But it does not follow that there is no pertinency to the attempt to understand the basis of the moral life, instead simply of reverencing it. The business of criticism, of speculation, is an interlude in life which marks a certain postponement. But it is not therefore an aberration to be deplored; it may well be a sign of progress rather, the result of increased resources which the old methods can no longer administer. To interpret the new science as mere unwisdom and disease is clearly to betray a dangerous blindness. The only outcome it leaves open is a return to pure instinct, with all its crudities, and uncertainty of hitting the mark. Thus in his theory of penal

law, for example, Carlyle frankly brushes aside the endeavor to rationalize and make efficient the dealing of society with its failures, and falls back upon a primitive vindictiveness as the one sound basis of punishment. Such a result indicates the defect of the whole attitude in morals. It may honestly believe itself a "fixed, irreconcilable, inexorable enmity to the enemies of God"; but it has no criterion for distinguishing, when the need arises, between the enemies of God and the enemies of Thomas Carlyle. And if one has not Carlyle's own fixed certainty that his first instinct is always right, he is left with no court of appeal. Actually, of course, the moral "facts" which Carlyle opposes to theory are after all nothing but his own interpretations, or theories, of the facts; and his strong disposition to suppose that a theory becomes a fact if only you reiterate it forcibly enough and decline to argue it, is not to be accepted without reserve.

4. One outcome in particular of this mental attitude deserves some special attention. Since genuine knowledge is for Carlyle immediate intuition or insight, he has no patience with complex programs of political reform, or with the theories on which they rest. To be sure, even Carlyle cannot get along without a program; but his method has the peculiarity that it tries to dispense with the apparatus of political speculation and argument. In other words his solution is: put matters into the hands of those God-inspired men who are not infected with the sceptical disease of the times, and they will settle everything for us—so the implication runs—through that native instinct for the right and the expedient which was the great advantage that earlier and more favored ages possessed over our own. Insight and reverence are the beginning of wisdom—insight into whatever is an expression of the divine; and of all such expressions the highest is to be found in man. The hero, the man of preëminent worth, is thus the starting point for all social efficiency. On the other hand the hero, while he exists, is the rare exception; the mass of man-

kind are "mostly fools." But if the masses cannot think and act for themselves, they can at least recognize their incapacity, can take to themselves leaders wiser than they, and so can be set upon the path which, left to themselves, they must have missed. There is no act more moral among men, Carlyle declares, than that of rule and obedience. Man is necessitated to obey superiors; he is a social being in virtue of this necessity. The most precious gift a man can offer is his approbation, his reverence to another man. The Liberal tendencies of his day seemed to him pointed therefore in the wrong direction. These emphasized popular control, the extension of the franchise, liberty, democracy; what men need, instead, is iron discipline. Everywhere the evils of liberty loom large in Carlyle's vision; the errors of a system of subordination and discipline are venial, which it is a mere sentimentalism to press.

Such an ideal can hardly be accepted as having any self-evident and transparent claim. In conceiving of life as most profitably spent in "swallowing one's disgusts, and doing faithfully the ugly commanded work"—a task for the value of which one has to trust his superiors,—Carlyle, for all his professed concern for the human soul, is really looking to the external fact rather than the inner. "The vital point is not who decides," he writes, "but what is decided on." By no means; the vital point is to develop a race of men who are capable of deciding rightly. And since he is too much of a realist not to know that democracy is here to stay, for Carlyle in his later days the whole world has gone hopelessly wrong, and there is nothing to do but wrap himself in his prophet's mantle, and predict the dreadful evils that are to come of it, with slight expectation that his words will be heeded or do good. With all his certain confidence in the goodness and justice of things, to all *practical* intents he turns out a pessimist; whatever may be the conditions in the eternal world, so

far as the eye can look ahead in this actual world he sees everything going to the dogs.

5. At the same time that Carlyle was preaching transcendentalism in England, a more general movement, drawing on somewhat similar sources of inspiration in spite of its connection with an individualism in the sharpest contrast with Carlyle's hero-worship, was having an interesting career in America. New England Transcendentalism is both a doctrine, and a life. It "denounces materialism in philosophy, formalism in religion, utilitarianism in personal and social ethics. It is a vindication of soul against sense, spirit against letter, faith against rite, heroism and nobleness against petty expediencies of the market." The central article of its creed is the autonomous and creative activity of the individual soul, which stands at the center of things as the source of all values and the touchstone of all truth. Self-culture therefore, in the largest sense, became the main business of the Transcendentalist. The ideal has its dangers, and these were not absent in the history of the movement. Even in Emerson, the profound reverence with which he approaches the sanctity of the inner self is a failure in perfect intellectual poise, due to too absolute a sense of the universal importance of that peculiar intellectual ferment through which New England happened to be passing, and almost as naïve at times as Jones Very's profession that he felt it an honor to wash his own face, being as it was the temple of the Spirit. But on the whole the movement was a healthy one. In spite of an obvious logic which tended to make the Transcendentalist draw back from practical reforms, his sympathies were on the side of righteous causes, more particularly when they stood for the enfranchising of the human spirit, and did not run to social or governmental machinery. Thus he was almost always to be found in the anti-slavery ranks, while the movement for the emancipation of women was a favorite with him.

Of the figures prominent in the movement, that of Bronson Alcott is the most picturesque, as well as in some ways very typical. The center of his "system" appears to have been the doctrine of matter as the refuse, the residuum of Spirit, and the genesis of Nature through the lapse of personal beings from holiness; and he makes much of an insight into the spine as the type of all Nature. More definite are the practical deductions from his idealism. Thus manuring is a base, corrupting, and unjust mode of forcing Nature. A distinction is made between vegetables which aspire or grow into the air, and the baser products which grow downward into the earth—potatoes, beets and radishes,—of which he would not allow the use. The canker worms, again, that infest the apple trees are not to be molested, they have the same right to the apples that man has. In spite of these idiosyncracies, however, Alcott at his best must by all accounts have had something of a genius for conversation of a certain sort. This sort of conversation is indeed the issue to which Transcendentalism seems naturally to gravitate, and its character—of stimulation without precision—is symptomatic of the intellectual limitations of the movement. Another representative figure is that of Margaret Fuller, who embodies typically the craving for culture and intellectual distinction under conditions to which it is a little alien, and which lend it therefore a lively appreciation of its own virtue and rarity.

6. It is Emerson, however, who gives the movement its chief significance, and in whom all its features of permanent value may be seen at their best. Emerson's method may not seem at first to lend itself to a straightforward presentation of his beliefs. It is seldom that he argues; he *sees* truth rather, and sets down what he sees as it comes to him. For consistency he professedly cares nothing; it is the "hobgoblin of little minds." Nevertheless this method of Emerson's is after all perhaps the best clue to his philosophy. For intuition, the flash of immediate insight into truth universal and divine, is not



simply the one true way of knowledge; it is life itself, the only true kind of existence as well. Truth, eternal and necessary—this is God, reality, being. It follows that a true philosophy is bound to be idealistic. The Universe is the externalization of the Soul. The earth and the heavenly bodies, physics and chemistry, which we sensually treat as if they were self-existent, are in truth only the retinue of our own being. Nature is the incarnation of a thought, and turns to a thought again, as ice becomes water and gas. "Every chemical change, every change of vegetation from the first principle of growth in the eye of the leaf to the tropical forest and antediluvian coal mine, every animal function from the sponge up to Hercules, shall hint or thunder to man the laws of right and wrong, and echo the Ten Commandments."

If one asks more precisely what is the relation of the individual person to this eternal Truth that constitutes the soul of the universe, the answer follows again from the nature of the experience in which truth is revealed. The immediate intuition of spiritual truth carries with it, as an experience, two distinctive characters; insight into truth is universal, and it is spontaneous. The truth experience overrides all particulars; and when a truth reveals itself to us, it commonly appears to come, too, as a revelation. We cannot get it by striving, by willing, by agonizing, as we may particular facts of observation. Suddenly we find our minds illuminated; but how we came to see we cannot fully explain. These characters which truth reveals, Emerson interprets through his theory of an identity of the human soul with the World Soul. Man can understand truth because truth is in its essence everywhere one and the same. In the vision of spiritual meaning we do not simply know about reality; we *are* reality, we conjoin center with center. My insight is not my own private possession; it is the flowing through me of the great tide of Being. "Standing on the bare ground, my head bathed in the blithe air, and uplifted into infinite space, all mean egotism

vanishes. I become a transparent eyeball. I am nothing, I see all; the currents of the universal being circulate through me; I am part and particle of God."

The ethics which Emerson deduces from such a conception is first of all one of self-dependence. Speak your latent conviction, and it shall be the universal sense. Imitation is suicide; what another announces I must find true in me, or wholly reject, and on his word or as his second, be he who he may, I can accept nothing. The only right is what is after my constitution, the only wrong is what is against it. So of everything that tends to limit us, and that keeps us from trusting to our own insight—creeds, parties, accepted ideals, teachers, books, our own past even. It is this that on the whole constitutes the most engaging aspect of Emerson's teaching, and lends to his pages their tonic quality. As the more positive supplement to this there is, again, the continual insistence on the potential infinity of the self, and the demand that we be ever going on to something new; the one great evil is to rest satisfied, and the only sin is limitation. It is one natural consequence of this strong individualistic emphasis, that Emerson should be inclined to depreciate the importance that modern times have assigned to humanitarian and social activities; "causes" represent an outer rather than an inner claim, and a man's first duty is to himself.

7. For this last disposition there is, however, another reason also, which goes back again to Emerson's Platonism. "Expression" is, to be sure, for Emerson essential; but expression is to be found not merely, or chiefly, in outer and practical changes. "That hankering after an overt and practical effect seems to me," he writes, "an apostasy. In good earnest, I am willing to spare this most unnecessary deal of doing. Life wears to me a visionary face. Hardest, roughest action is visionary also. People disparage knowing and the intellectual life, and urge doing. I am very content with knowing, if only I could know. I have not found that much was gained by

manipular attempts to realize the world of thought." Why indeed should we be at such pains for this or that particular end, when presently the dream will scatter, and we shall burst into universal power? One cannot say indeed without reserve that Emerson neglects facts. He preaches a catholic acceptance of whatever comes to our net in experience; and he exalts the realized idea, the idea to which the world spirit has given actual expression, over the mere thought in our heads. But still it is for the sake of the law that the fact exists; and given the law, it ceases to have any further significance. Nor do "facts" represent for Emerson primarily anything in the way of first-hand experience. They are reached through the intellect, and the intellect at work chiefly upon books and conversation; and it is the intellectual experience therefore that he really prizes. "I looked upon trades, politics, and domestic life," Emerson writes in the *Journal*, "as games to keep men amused, and hinder them from asking *cui bono?* until their eyes and minds are grown"; then they become superfluous. The practical consequences are apparent; if the individual instance is so trivial alongside the principle of the thing, which already is realized in the eternal world, what seems to be the use of bothering with little peddling changes and reforms?

8. It is very hard to draw here in words a line that will hold in any strict way. "I know," writes Emerson, "against all appearances, that the universe can receive no detriment, that there is a remedy for every wrong and a satisfaction for every goal"; and without some such ultimate faith life always runs the risk of being paralyzed. This buoyant and placid way of meeting life, which dwells upon the eternal nature of the good, and keeps the notion of harm and failure from the mind, has undoubtedly something to be said in its behalf, as is shown by its career—largely influenced by Emerson—in Christian Science and similar movements. Still there is a wide difference between saying that evil is not ultimate,—that it may be conquered, that is, by one who sets himself to do it,—

and saying that it is already overcome, that it simply is not, and so that we have no active duty toward it except to deny it. There is no crime to the intellect, Emerson writes. Sin seen from the thought is a diminution or less, seen from the conscience or will it is pravity or bad; and the implication is that the latter attitude is less fundamental than the former, and that the sufficient reminder therefore is not to try to better things, but merely to recognize that the good already is safe. "Misery is superficial, and the remedy, when it can be secured, of presenting to the mind universal Truth is a perfect one." Logically this can only be intended to throw cold water upon our active endeavor to cast our own weight into the scale. To the will, evil must always be more than a negation; we do not fight with shadows, nor in the act of fighting can that which opposes us seem nothing but a shadow.

There is another criticism also to which such a philosophy of optimism is exposed; on the intellectual side, it shows a defective appreciation of certain qualities of the real world. Granting that we ought to adopt an attitude of courage toward the world, there is no advantage in ignoring real difficulties, in refusing to admit our weaknesses, in talking as if in truth the will were unlimited and above all conditions. The simple answer is that the facts are not so; and if in order to spur on the spirit of self-reliance, and avoid spoiling the force of our exhortation, we talk as if they were so, we lay ourselves open to the risk that is always present when we shut our eyes to realities. Thus do all things, so Emerson in one form or another is constantly declaring, preach the indifference of circumstances. But circumstances are not indifferent, and it is no use pretending they are. *Really* everybody knows that there are limits,—though doubtless we ought not to be too hasty in setting these,—to anyone's power of controlling hostile circumstances; and that apart from favorable outward conditions to call forth our powers, they will remain

in part at least unexpressed. Not everything can develop wholly from within, if indeed anything can. And if fate refuses favorable conditions, no amount of talk about the infinity of man and the virtue of self-reliance can supply the lack. One may note in this connection Emerson's repugnance to the notion that bodily conditions limit the powers of the spirit,—passing in our own day into the doctrine of the sufficiency of mental treatment,—and his repudiation of the physician and the biologist.

And this becomes most serious when it determines our attitude to other men. Here at least the readiness to sink the outer in the inner, and ignore the importance of favorable surroundings for the best development of the race, is not only to give up the possibility of any explanation of the pressing facts of man's actual life, but it is, through a dependence upon the sole method of the inspirational book or lecture, to put oneself out of sympathy with all less absolute attempts to do a little something toward righting the many wrong things that we find about us. Emerson's is one way, and within its sphere a useful one. But in turning it, against his own warning,—he speaks of the "over-faith of each man in the importance of what he has to do or say,"—into a philosophy, and interpreting the universe after the image of his own private and special type of interest, he is taking a questionable path. That he is himself a "seeing eye rather than a helping hand" is a sufficient excuse for his plan of life; but it does not forthwith justify the metaphysical judgment that to see is the end for which everything exists. This may possibly be; but it is at least a point against it if its logic seems to belittle the facts of our ordinary life and endeavor. For it is "only the finite that has wrought and suffered; the infinite lies sheltered in smiling repose." When a philosopher begins to talk about *only* the finite, it is well to be on one's guard.

§ 2. *T. H. Green*

1. It is of course only in certain rather elusive aspects that the thinking of Carlyle and Emerson, as of Coleridge in the earlier part of the century, can be brought into connection with the actual metaphysical apparatus of German Idealism to which attention has now to be directed. The first serious attempt, backed by an adequate knowledge of the literature in detail, to naturalize this philosophy in the English world, is Hutchinson Stirling's *Secret of Hegel*. In Stirling, the religious and social interests which, in a staid form, were to supply the motive for the thinking of Green and most of his earlier disciples, take the shape of a vivacious attack upon the spirit of the Aufklärung,—for Stirling personified more particularly in Mr. Buckle,—the theory of evolution, and the new political economy with its glorification of individualism and laissez-faire; and he hails the philosophic vision of a rational whole of things—Hegel's "concrete universal"—as a powerful weapon for the overthrow of the materialism and self-will of an industrial society based on wealth, which had supplanted the better and saner culture of England in the past. Stirling's own style does not escape the obscurity of his German models, ultimate difficulties are only lightly touched upon by him, and more orthodoxy in religion is credited to Hegel than probably is justified; still in the large the book is an able anticipation of the change of spirit which was on the point of taking place in academic English philosophy.

2. The most powerful single influence in securing to Absolute Idealism the position, which it continued to hold until into the twentieth century, of an almost official philosophy in England and America, is that of Thomas Hill Green; and its rapid success is in the first place due, as has been said, to the fact that it seemed to offer a profounder and more potent means of overthrowing the prevailing naturalistic creed than

was supplied by antagonists already in the field. The effort of British empiricism,—at least so Green interprets it, by identifying it with a single logical motive in particular, most prominent in Hume,—is to eliminate the work of “mind” from the world of knowledge, and reduce the object of knowledge to bare passive sensations. These the mind may proceed to deal with in the way of reproduction, combination, and abstraction. But the sole reality continues to be the material of fleeting individual feelings; and the conceptions which seem to be implicated in our everyday notions of the world,—substance, causality, and the like,—are illegitimate fictions which the mind imposes. The ideal of knowledge is, accordingly, to be found in the passive acceptance of what is forced upon us in feeling, denuded of the “relations” that come from the mind’s own activity; for if these are fictions, then the more the intelligence works upon the material of sense the further from reality it carries us. The significance of Hume lies in the fact that by taking this ideal of method seriously, he brought to light its inevitable outcome—that knowledge, namely, is impossible. And the only way of escape is to turn our back upon it squarely, and recognize, with Kant, that the relational activity of the mind is involved in the very existence of a real world, so that without it reality is a meaningless term. The true method of philosophy is not to turn our eyes inward to an analysis of our subjective consciousness,—by this path we only throw doubt upon all knowledge alike; it is to examine reality itself, as this forms the content of the knowledge we indubitably possess,—in science, morality, art, religion,—and find out what its possession implies.

And in this way, following Kant again, we discover that the possibility of knowledge depends upon the presence of a principle of unity, not identical with the succession of events, through which the flux of feeling is constructed into a real “object,” and ultimately into a universe. The very meaning of “reality” carries the consequence that nothing in any sense

is real for us which does not enter into this organized unity of a knowledge system. Once see this, and we are rid at one blow of two fetiches which empiricism has cherished—the notion of isolated sensations out of which an illusory world is built up by external association, and the notion of a reality beyond experience which is in its essence unknowable. Knowledge does not have its origin in mere feelings, because mere feelings are unthinkable and unreal; a feeling *is* at all only as it is this or that feeling in particular, and it cannot be something in particular except as it is part of a definite relational context involving distinction from, and connection with, other particulars. The being of a thing is never adequately expressed by saying, It is just itself and nothing else; for this would mean that it is inexpressible. Actually a sensation, instead of being the *prius* in the way of knowledge, is a relatively late product of analysis; it is something we discover as an element always in a larger whole. So an unknowable Absolute, again, is simply a contradiction in terms, since we presuppose that we can know it when we talk about it even as existing. The truth is that the relativity philosophers are looking in the wrong direction. The fault with an Absolute characterized as mere being of existence is not that we cannot know it; we can know “being” perfectly, since there is nothing in the bare abstract character of being to know except just this character itself. The trouble is not with its unknowability, but with its abstractness. The true nature of reality is to be found, not by stripping off all its special features, but, rather, by remedying its partialness and incompleteness, and making knowledge more and more concrete and all-embracing, until we have a fully rounded system in which every identical aspect of the real world is incorporated in its proper place. This concrete universal, this manifold in unity, is reality, or truth; and nothing isolated and barely particular, nothing outside the unitary system, has any being by itself. The empiricists, accordingly, ignore the one thing most essential and fundamental—the



spiritual thread of unity which is necessary if we are to have reality at all. ✓

3. From the recognition of this spiritual fact of the unity of knowledge, as identified by Green with the unity of "self-consciousness," flow the significant consequences for religion and ethics in which he is primarily interested. The tendency of science had been to reduce man to a purely animal life in the midst of an indifferent universe, out of which the human race has been developed by an unintelligent process of natural selection. Now this may indeed be true of the physical organism. But the real man, the essential self as an intelligent bearer of knowledge, cannot possibly be a creature of the natural world for this simple reason, that there would *be* no natural world were not the spiritual principle of self-consciousness already presupposed. The world is real only for knowledge; and that which is necessary to constitute a world cannot therefore be the passive product of this world. The unity of phenomena cannot be one of the phenomena unified, the consciousness of combination is not a combined consciousness. We can know a temporal series of facts *as* a series only as the facts are held together through something present alike to each of them, and itself, consequently, out of time; and such a timeless principle can never be a result of the process of change. Since therefore man has it in him to know phenomena, he is necessarily not himself a phenomenon; the true self, as is shown by the very possibility of scientific knowledge, is something immaterial and immovable, neither in time nor in space, eternally one with itself. However, it is not of course the empirical self, the mere private individual, which thus exists outside of the time process and of the natural order that belongs to time. The empirical self is just one item in the natural world,—not an isolated item, since there is nothing isolated, but a minor portion of the total universe; it is not the knower, therefore, but an object of knowledge, a part of the knowledge content. The true self or knower is, again, that principle of universality,—

timeless because the unity which alone makes a succession of events possible cannot itself be one successive moment among others,—by virtue of which reality is brought within a comprehensive system.

And it follows that, since nothing can be real for knowledge except as it comes within this unified whole, there can be but one Self—the universal Consciousness, or God; God is the necessary postulate which knowledge requires if it is to have any validity or truth. Green's argument is, to repeat, that reality has no meaning apart from a unity of knowledge; and such a unifying principle we nowhere find except in self-consciousness. But since it is clear that self-consciousness in its mere private capacity does not make reality, and that a world already constituted by thought exists prior to our individual acquaintance with it, we must suppose that our true self, which alone explains how knowledge for us is possible, is identical with that eternally existing Self which religion calls God. God is thus no Other over against whom man stands in a relation of externality, and whom he knows indirectly and inferentially. That would be to make God himself an object, and not the constitutive source on which all objects alike depend. The very principle of knowledge in us which constitutes our essential nature is God's nature likewise; in knowledge, man participates in the actual life of God. Meanwhile the particular human self is a compound of the finite and the infinite; it is an animal organism used as the vehicle of an eternally complete consciousness. But even our human knowledge, again, is not of a reality different from itself; reality is the same wherever it appears. Our knowledge is the revelation of actually existing ideas, through which possibilities of them in us are gradually actualized; God is the realization of the possibilities of man.

4. This incompleteness of man's life, when taken in connection with its potential infinity, Green turns to account in his theory of the ethical experience. "As sensation is merely an

animal function, and does not become an element in knowledge until it is taken up into the unity of the self, so desire has as such no ethical significance, and enters into moral conduct only as it, too, is related to the self, and becomes a form of self-realization. An animal want or instinct is nothing but a blind propulsion; before it represents a conscious desire or motive, it must become the presentation of a wanted *object*. But an object, it has appeared, involves the work of that universal spiritual principle which is not an aspect of the "natural" life at all. And if conscious motives, since they involve the activity of spirit, are thus not of natural origin—are not phenomena,—the human will must be regarded as a timeless act, and, therefore, free, since that which makes temporal succession possible cannot itself be determined by any event in time. The ethical end, accordingly, is not to be identified with pleasure; mere pleasure, indeed, as a separate bit of feeling, has already been shown to have no reality at all. The true end can only be found in the satisfaction of that spiritual self which it is impossible should be realized in any isolated event in time, or any number of such events; it is a satisfaction "on the whole," a permanent well-being that consists in the full realization of human powers, and that does not pass away therefore with this or that transitory feeling. Man does not live for pleasure, but for the realization of his capacities as a unified and spiritual self.

There is another consequence of this conception of the good as the realization of a non-natural or spiritual principle which constitutes the true self; it implies that man is not a separate individual, but a member of a spiritual community, attaining his good only in connection with the lives of his fellows, whose self-realization is included in his own. Moral growth consists in the progressive discovery that the things which, in nature, and our fellow men, and the institutions of society, at first had seemed an external hindrance to the freedom of the individual's self-assertion, are in reality themselves a means ✓

to his development; their appropriation extends indefinitely the boundaries of the self, until in the end we come to see that nothing whatever is alien to the true inner life. And this brings us back to religion. For the idea which governs this process of self-realization is the complete attainment of that identity with the universal Self which is implicit in the fact of knowledge. It is true that what God's nature is, we cannot know beyond its very partial revelation up to date in the existing spiritual products of human history; and so the ideal seems to be lacking in concrete directions for our guidance. But at least it tells us that we have not yet attained; and in this recognition of an eternal "more," and the pressure which it puts upon us, we have the source of all moral progress. || ✓

5. In turning now to a consideration of Green's idealism, a possible ambiguity needs first to be pointed out in connection with the nature of his eternal principle. There are two interpretations of the "unity of consciousness" which, though connected, are not identical. The first and perhaps most natural way to understand the phrase would be in terms of the psychological unity of that stream of conscious experiencing which constitutes what we know as the inner life of an empirical self. It is beyond question that I, as a particular person who thinks and feels and acts in the midst of a world of physical processes and of other persons, do find the various contents of my life held together in some fashion as a whole; there is a realization of unity, more or less complete, running through the succession of the fleeting states of my being. In this meaning, then, the principle would represent a psychological fact, empirically discoverable, which helps to characterize that particular portion of reality which I call a human consciousness.

But there is also another meaning that might be given to the principle. It is possible to speak intelligibly of "consciousness" when I intend to refer thus to the immediate inner facts of life that come home to me in feeling or direct awareness,—in this sense my private conscious life has a unity of a special or psy-

chological sort that does not include the other things and selves that lie beyond its range; or I may, again, call these external things themselves the objects of consciousness, in so far as my experience brings me into any sort of cognitive contact with them. In this second meaning, not my empirical self merely, but the whole range of known realities, enters into the unity of consciousness or experience.

To avoid this ambiguity it will be better, and at least equally natural, to call the latter unity always the unity of knowledge, rather than the unity of the self, or of self-consciousness. Meanwhile it is the second of the two standpoints that bulks very much the larger in Green's exposition. This alone lends itself directly to the belief in an eternal consciousness that embraces all reality; the mere recognition of the unity of my life palpably falls short of such an outcome. And accordingly the first and least ambiguous formulation of the idealistic thesis will be, not that reality is intelligence, or a rational self, but that it is *intelligible*, or rational—is capable, that is, of being known, and known as in some sense a unified and related whole. My self, from which the notion of "self-consciousness" is of course derived, we may indeed turn to for a possible clue to the nature of this knowledge unity. But taken as it stands, and apart from the ambiguous identification of the two meanings of the word, it gives us not my *self*, but my *knowledge*, as that which first suggests itself as an interpretative concept; and we are getting ahead of the argument if we take for granted, either that the unity of a knowledge content constitutes the unity of the self, or that it could not exist in the absence of a self. The fact from which we start is the fact that nothing is real for knowledge except in terms of rational relationships within some more comprehensive unity of system; what the status of this system is we have still to inquire.

6. And now this suggests an intelligible meaning that might attach to what the idealist has to say about the identification of reality with knowledge or intelligence, without making it

necessary to give up our ordinary realistic prejudices, or to commit ourselves to a special metaphysics. There clearly is a sense in which knowledge, or science, may be regarded as coextensive with reality, or at least with reality in so far as it possesses any possible interest for man; but what sense? Evidently this in the first instance, that knowledge in some fashion or other is able to describe reality, by translating into the medium of terms and propositions its abstract qualities, laws, and characteristics generally. In speaking of these characters as abstract, a word of caution may be necessary. It is a sound contention of the idealists that significant knowledge is not abstract in the sense which involves the progressive dropping out of the specific features of existence. There is every reason to agree that the ideal of knowledge is a systematic whole in which all possible aspects of the world take their place. But in granting this we still, unless we arbitrarily abandon the natural point of view, and beg the whole philosophical question, are dealing only with a matter of logical content. It is clear that everyday thinking, whatever its readiness to assume that reality is intelligible, and that our knowledge is a perfectly good account of the real facts, is not under the slightest temptation to suppose that scientific or philosophical knowledge as such *is* the universe. It is a scheme of relationships abstracted from their presence in the existing world, and held precipitated in an ideal realm of human thought. And if we are to approve our philosophical opinions to the common-sense man who dwells in the breast of each of us, we are bound to recognize that the logical description which forms the content of knowledge is the description of a world which has a real existence not resolvable into merely descriptive terms, and which, therefore, though it is intelligible, is not itself thought or knowledge in the ordinary sense of the words. While it has a nature to which thought may attain, it is not a bare "nature" and nothing more, inhabiting a bodiless realm of timeless self-identity; it is an active, full-blooded world of real objects, producing

real effects in time. The scientist's formula may sum up adequately the character of the physical or the chemical fact; but it is not capable of acting as a substitute in the world of events for real physical and chemical forces.

It will be possible, then, to assign a meaning to much that Green has to say, without abandoning more familiar ways of thinking, if we translate his statements about reality into logical terms, and think, not of what we ordinarily mean when we talk of the existing universe, but of that comprehensive scheme of relationships, of ideal intellectual content divorced from existence, by which scientific thinking endeavors to set forth the *character* of the objects with which in our practical life we come into contact. But the very possibility of making in our thought this contrast, is a strong reason against supposing too readily that such a knowledge system *is* identically reality itself, and that no further question about the relation between reality and knowledge need arise to bother the philosopher. And if it should appear that the identification involves the confusing of real distinctions of thought, or that it slurs over the existence of important facts of experience for which it finds no natural explanation, it will need to show very unusual merits of its own to offset this.

7. The gist of Green's argument, to repeat, is this, that the unity of knowledge is unintelligible apart from the presence of a single timeless spiritual principle which constitutes alike the reality of the self, and of the universe. So long as we keep solely to the acknowledged fact that knowledge is, or tends to be, a unified and related intellectual content, this is to go considerably beyond what at first sight is implied in our datum. All sorts of philosophies have held that reality can be thought intelligibly as a whole, materialistic as well as spiritualistic. All that the logical postulate by itself demands is, that there should be relations binding things together, and that these relations should be capable of being thought,—not that they should have their sole existence within a unitary mind. When

all has been said about the objectivity of relations, why might it not be possible that our ordinary view is justified in supposing that the mind can think that which is not itself a thought? why may not relations be real outside of a mind, and yet be thinkable? The fact may not be so; but it does not appear inherently absurd. There is no immediate self-evidence in the judgment that because an influence passes from the sun to vegetation, or because spring follows winter and precedes summer, these groups of facts must of necessity have their sole being in the unity of a divine mind. If the idealistic thesis is to be maintained, it at least will call for more extended argument.

The simplest line of reasoning that might be followed here would run something as follows: Since knowing is a mental act, and since, for purposes of thinking, relations have therefore to be brought "within the mind," we can be sure they are not without an affinity of some sort with the mental; and so we may reasonably use this fact to interpret their standing in the outer world, and may conjecture that there also they have their reality in the same mental form. This however hardly represents the natural type of argument that Green's thesis calls for. At best it leaves a dualism between the idea in our mind and its embodiment in a more ultimate mind, which idealism wishes to avoid; and since the conclusion is only an inferential interpretation of a reality beyond our thought, it gives merely a conjectural and analogical proof where idealism demands certainty. The real point of Green's position is, that in knowledge we have the veritable presence of reality itself, and no reference to a "beyond" in terms of finite thinking; has he actually rendered such a thesis probable?

8. The proof on which Green ultimately relies for this is implied rather than clearly stated; and it is valid only as we already take for granted the assumption that has been attributed to him—that reality *is* nothing but a knowledge system.



From this it follows that we have only to point to an identity of logical content between man's knowledge and God's to break down at once any separation between the two. This assumption, however, is of course just what our more familiar habits of thought refuse to entertain. We have knowledge—this is not denied, and the content of knowledge is a timeless system, identical with itself under all conditions. But it is timeless only because for our intellectual purposes we have taken it out of the flux of events in time, and have translated everything into ideal terms of logical content where time itself now exists only as a timeless set of relationships. There is no doubt of our ability to do this; the question is whether in the result reality still is present in all its fulness.

9. In order to deal with Green's answer, it will be necessary now to introduce again that notion of the "self" which has been temporarily ignored. No logical compulsion seems to call for this. A knowledge system possesses unity. But why should this unity be set off in any degree from the complex of relationships that enter into a unity? why is not unity itself only one aspect in the related system? Where do we get the right, that is, to talk of a spiritual principle, an active agent, which superinduces itself upon the relations and brings them into a whole, and which cannot itself be conditioned by any of the relations that result from its "combining and unifying action"? The chief motive for this in Green's case will be found in his ethical and religious interests; but also perhaps it is explainable through the difficulty we have in maintaining ourselves in the high altitude of pure knowledge content, to which the thesis so far confines us. We cannot altogether forget that knowledge also is for man an event in a personal history, a function of a temporal succession; and because reality apparently is *in* time, we turn to an "active" principle, an "agent," to change it from appearance to reality. In any case the unity of the empirical self, with its suggestion of the particular and

the temporal, does actually serve for Green in this way as a mediating term between the chaos of mere feelings, and the timeless unity of pure knowledge.

But the remedy will work only when we confuse, once more, the temporal unity of the process of experience with the timeless unity of a knowledge content; and in the degree in which Green insists upon the timelessness of the self as well, all connection with a temporal world vanishes again. Nothing in the argument for a timeless self is relevant to the peculiar character of that felt continuity of experience to which the empirical self is tied; the reasoning gets its force entirely from the refusal to recognize any difference between the logical and the existential or psychological fact. Logically it is true that in the *idea* of succession there is no temporal separation of antecedent and consequent; both are held together in an indivisible and non-temporal unity. But in the *feeling* of succession, which enters into an actual human experience, this is not so evidently the case. Somehow or other, to be sure, experience is capable of being felt as continuous, and is not a string of bare disjointed states; this is a fundamental fact which the possibility of rational experience presupposes. But it does not follow that the life which is thus bound together is taken out of time. On the contrary, the whole meaning of the felt relation is a temporal one, and "before" and "after" are no mere logical distinctions, but actual characters in the real world. For if the very fact that our human experience is unified,—the fact, in short, that we have experience,—is enough to take it out of time, it is impossible to understand how even the illusion of time could have arisen. If a temporal series were not unified, Green argues, we could not know it *as* a series. But neither could we know it as a series if, with the introduction of unity, it straightway ceased to be a series. I cannot indeed *know* two things as before and after, except as the related terms are both timelessly implicated in a unity of thought; but if the *things* to which the relations attach are

not really in temporal succession, then my thought falsifies them.

Green's argument depends, then, on the refusal to see any distinction between the experienced unity of a human life, and the logical unity of a system of thought,—a unity indeed out of time, but out of time because it is logical, and not because it is unified. Everywhere he presupposes that unless we fall back on the timeless unity of logical content, we are forced to the alternative of a meaningless chaos of unrelated feelings. But it is not evident why there may not be, as there appears to be, a more immediate experience of unity which is not timeless, but itself identical with a portion of the time process. Indeed we might seem bound to presuppose some immediate experience of time before the thought of time could have any content. And it is in harmony with all our mental prepossessions to regard the unity of the empirical self as such a temporal fact, felt as stretching out over an actual temporal span, and having, as a whole, its beginning and its ending. And Green's argument seems always to miss this possibility. The content of a consciousness of a sensible event, he urges, is not itself a sensible event. Now the logical content in terms of which we know a past sensible event is not indeed a sensible event; and also the immediate experience of a sensible event is not a "mere" unrelated feeling. But surely there is *some* interpretation in which everyone would acknowledge that it is an "event," and an event that cannot be disconnected from sensation. Even an act of knowledge comes into being and passes away again; and no appeal to the abstract descriptive content which it makes use of for the purposes of knowing can alter this. What Green is really doing here in order to get a timeless self, is to hypostasize consciousness, and then to argue that between this consciousness of succession and its elements there can be no temporal relationship, since it is present to all of them alike. But the experience of succession is not an hypostasized spiritual principle, but simply what it claims to

be—time-revealing experience; and with reference to its components it does not need to *have* a temporal relation, because it *is* their temporal relationship. And it still remains temporally related also to a wider context. This wider relation can indeed only be apprehended by us through the medium of a timeless knowledge content; but this takes it out of time only in case, once more, we beg the question at the start, and identify reality with the abstract content in terms of which it is known.

10. Now if we feel ourselves constrained to accept at all the notion of a self which is neither God, nor a chaos of unrelated feelings, but which, existing in time as a particular portion of reality whose acts of knowing are in every case particular events, is yet really competent to pass, through knowledge, beyond its limited existence, and to grasp the ideal content of a larger world, it brings back inevitably the problems that Idealism congratulates itself on avoiding. If reality itself is nothing but a descriptive content which constitutes a rational or logical system, a human self, and the fact that it perceives or knows, will of course enter into this descriptive system *only* in the way that anything else may do. But if there is such a thing as "existence," which logic does not fully compass, the matter is more complicated. In that case we have not merely to place the *thought* of a human self in the *thought* of the wider context of the universe; we have to relate the same system twice over in different forms, once as the actual universe in its known character, and once as the thought of an insignificant human person occupying a particular place in time. And then knowledge, in its human sense, ceases to *be* the object, and becomes again a knowledge *of* the object, separated from it in point of existential being.

Green has in general three ways of dealing with this situation, which is the crux of his peculiar philosophical point of view. Most frequently, he simply ignores the human aspect, and concerns himself solely with knowledge as logical content, without asking what its being known by *us* implies. This atti-

tude he backs up on occasion by specific arguments to show why there *can* be no further question, and why the supposed distinction between thought and reality, knowledge and thing known, self and object, is logically meaningless. And, finally, he proceeds to admit the essential fact in dispute, while covering up nevertheless the extent of his admission so that he is able to persuade himself that it has not been made.

II. Green's reason for holding that the distinction between thought and reality is untenable is roughly this: To talk of anything as outside human experience is *ipso facto* to bring it within human experience, and confess that it is not external and independent after all; things-in-themselves are in the nature of the case unknown and unknowable, and so entirely without meaning to us. The very use of the term "external" defeats our purpose. We are not entitled to say that anything is outside of consciousness, for externality, as a relation, exists only in the medium of consciousness; it is one of the relations by which consciousness connects its objects, and so cannot relate consciousness with its objects. To say, again, that an outside world "acts" upon our minds, is the same as saying that a world which exists only by the activity of our minds is the cause of that activity. Similarly on the side of the self; it cannot be, as the dualist implies, the empirical self which is the subject in knowledge, because the empirical self is knowable, and so is an "object" which itself implies a more ultimate subject. The true distinction between the consciousness of the finite individual, and what really exists, is not that between consciousness and its opposite, but between a more and a less complete consciousness. And to this logical argument there may be added a more practical sort of consideration. Is it not so that growth in wisdom consists in the discovery that man lives not in an alien universe, but in one that lends itself to appropriation by him for his own enlargement, and that the revelation of the true significance of the individual involves, therefore, the continual transcendence of his private

personality? And this offers another way in which to put the absurdity of realism; if it is urged that knowledge is always the property of some private individual, the answer is that such an isolated individual is itself a pure fiction.

All these considerations without exception get their force only when the question in dispute is prejudged. They can be given a perfectly good meaning *if* what we are talking about is the ideal content which descriptively we apply to reality, abstracted from the occurrence of knowing as an incident in a finite life; but they lose their controversial force the moment it is admitted as conceivable that the ideal content of human knowledge, and reality, may be distinguished. "External" is indeed perhaps not the best word to describe the relationship intended; it suggests too strongly a spatial character. All that is meant, however, is that objects may have a sort of existence, not unrelated to, but nevertheless quite distinguishable from, the psychical event—and all our thoughts are psychical events whatever else they may be—in which we apprehend their ideal nature; and this is not prejudicial in the least to the further claim that, *as* a logical character, every predicate that we can ascribe to reality, including the relation of externality itself, must, to be grasped in thought, be brought within a knowledge content. And it is incompetent to appeal to the absurdity of a thing-in-itself, because what is meant by a thing-in-itself is, not mere being that possesses no specific character,—which is what the idealist commonly insists that it must mean,—but being that has just the character that thought assigns to it, while nevertheless embodying this character on a different plane of existence from that which is involved in the act of human thinking. So again one need not deny the evident fact that in some real fashion the human self is not isolated, but finds its life in connection with the world about it. But if thought can bring us into relation to a reality which exists beyond the self who thinks it, this will mean, simply, not that my expanding life absorbs in a

literal sense the world of things and other selves, but only that it needs these conscious relationships to the world, mediated through knowledge, to supply its cognitive content and its value.

12. Now since, in talking of anything whatever, we necessarily put it in descriptive terms, every statement alike can get an interpretation, without going beyond the realm of logic; and there seems no compulsion that can force a philosopher against his will to look further for its meaning. The very objection that "existence" ought to be taken account of as well as logical content, can be turned if we insist that existence, too, is only a category of thought, and has no sense, therefore, other than is given by its place within a logical system. Perhaps only when we cease to be thinkers, and turn to life itself, does the pallid emptiness of a universe reduced to logical relations come fully home to us. But as a matter of theory, also, Green is constantly running up against certain aspects of the world very hard to reconcile with a thoroughgoing identity of thought and reality; and at the risk of repetition, these deserve some further attention.

Since knowledge is bound to mean our knowledge to begin with, and since there are reasons why the idealist wishes to postpone questions about the nature of the "knower," it will not be surprising if he often gives the impression that the thought on which objects are dependent, the thought which makes the world, is our finite human thought. Numerous passages might be quoted in which this seems to be said in so many words. But such a claim would of course misinterpret Green's real opinion; there are certain points about knowledge which, he clearly recognizes, negative such an interpretation. Although he has found it easy to discredit the "external" relation of thought to its object, there is another aspect of thought which no sober philosopher can possibly overlook, and that is the incompleteness of whatever knowledge human beings anywhere possess. Green has no intention of main-

taining the identity between this incomplete thought and reality; indeed in his ethics, in particular, he lays a good deal of stress upon the feebleness of our understanding at its best, and our necessary ignorance of reality in anything like its fulness. Accordingly the explanation keeps recurring that it is not finite thought that makes the world; the thought that constitutes objects is an eternally complete thought, which yet by its presence as a spiritual principle in us renders our incomplete knowledge possible.

One sense that might attach to this has already been discounted. The claim that our thought truly knows the real world would be disallowed, were it not so that the characters which it attributes to the world are the very same characters that really belong there. What however the dispute turns on is the further question whether this identity of abstract logical content is enough to constitute an identity of the two selves, or the two systems, as concrete facts of existence. If reality *is* nothing but logical content, it has been seen that the answer is inevitable. A logical fact is identical with itself wherever it may be found; and accordingly in so far as my thought reproduces the divine consciousness, it *is* the divine consciousness.

But now if the self in the two cases is identically the same self, why should there be, or appear to be, two systems, one incomplete, the other perfect? Either they are literally one, and then no question of duality ever could have arisen; or else, if the self that is present in both of them is one, but the systems themselves are capable of being distinguished, the difference must be due to some outstanding feature alien to the one spiritual principle. Green evades the difficulty by an appeal to our ignorance. He would have us refrain from asking *why* a perfect consciousness should thus go on to make innumerable imperfect copies of itself; we are, he says, not called upon to explain why reality is what it is. It might perhaps be thought that a philosophy whose whole aim is to substitute rational sig-



nificance for bare fact, *is* under an obligation to suggest some meaning for a central aspect of its world, so apparently without point, but at any rate this is scarcely the issue. It is a question primarily not of fact, but of logical consistency. And Green finds it impossible to express himself without implying constantly the dualism he is logically bound to avoid. Thus when he speaks for example of the source of the external relations, and the source of our knowledge of them, as one and the same, the distinction which he excludes from the "source" breaks out again at once in connection with its effects, and "our" knowledge separates from the system known. The character, then, which most indubitably attaches to human knowledge—its finiteness and incompleteness—opens up a gap between thought and reality that cannot be bridged by the mere assertion that they have a certain measure—but only a measure—of logical identity. Green accepts the finite at its face value as a "partial phase of the whole viewed in its isolation"; it does not seem to have occurred to him to ask the question, Viewed by whom, or what? For while a part may be a part, it needs some ingenuity to explain how it can get "viewed" in an isolation which, if the sole real point of view is that of the eternal self, has been shown to be a term without meaning.

13. A closely related difficulty has to do with the temporal character of finite human experience, including the experience of knowing. It has appeared that the moment an object becomes intelligible, it is taken out of time, and that the real self which does the knowing is also timeless; how then does the appearance of time arise? If the knowing self were different from the eternal self, one might perhaps be eternal, and the other temporal; but how can the same self be at once eternally timeless, and a development in time? And yet, by an unavoidable prejudice of our minds, the empirical self does seem to be a temporal fact; and if our incomplete knowledge is the reproduction of a timeless reality, at least it is a progressive reproduc-

tion. Green is so intent on saving the timelessness of knowledge, that he tends to lose sight of the main difficulty here. What, he asks, does the fact that we pass through a succession of mental states of consciousness mean? Not that knowledge is an event. The only event is the mental event of *arriving at* an apprehension of the related facts; and the event of passing into a state of consciousness is not that which makes it what it is *as* a state of consciousness. This last is, once more, the presence of a spiritual principle through which relations are brought together into a unity that excludes succession. But such a method of showing that *knowledge* is timeless depends, not on getting rid of time, but on locating it elsewhere in the event of arriving at knowledge. And how the timeless whole is capable of taking up a finite self whose partial character is only explainable through the conception of events in time, still remains unanswered.

14. It is in connection with one further aspect of the situation that Green's conclusions about the finite and the temporal seem at times on the point of crystallizing. It has appeared that his argument starts out from an attack on English sensationalism, in the interest of relations. Now there is no apparent need why an analysis of experience should not recognize the presence *both* of sensations and of relations between them; but in Green's case there are various motives not favorable to this. If we are right in supposing that the central element in his notion of reality is that logical framework into which, for human knowledge, the world ideally falls, then sensation in so far is not a logical fact. It is an existence, concrete, particular, localized in time. A relation it is easy and natural to think of as a universal and timeless fact; but not so a sensation. From another angle, too, it is hard for our everyday thought to get away from the belief that sensation implies an outside source or occasion. Thus even Kant had tended to think of experience as compounded of two elements, sensation and thought, the one of which has its origin from without, and

the other from the mind itself; it is this feature of Kant which Green and all his school are most anxious to correct. But then what *is* the place of sensation, or feeling, in the relational whole?

The easiest reply would be, logically, that sensation has no existence at all as distinct from relations; and there is ground for thinking that this is what Green in certain moods would like very much to be able to say. He does not say it quite unambiguously; and at times he says the opposite. Green is well aware of the barrenness, for religion and ethics at any rate, of an eternal self which has no place, along with thought, for will and feeling; and he makes this an objection against Caird's version of idealism. He even talks of feeling and thought as inseparable and mutually dependent, each in its full reality including the other.<sup>1</sup> But the more specific his arguments become, the more they make it evident that his real metaphysical interest lies on one side of this thesis only—that the reality of feeling includes relations; and his method of showing this leaves it uncertain to what extent, on the other hand, relation can be said even to *imply* feelings. By preëmping the word "reality," to begin with, for the intellectual way in which we distinguish, not the real from the unreal, but the real from what merely *seems* to be,—by identifying it, that is, with a purely logical function,—he is able to show that only in terms of relationships can this test be applied; the question about the reality of anything has to do solely with the question whether it is what it is taken to be,—that is, whether it is related as it seems to be related.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly the reality of feeling, also, has meaning only through its reference to a permanent order of nature; and this unalterableness does not belong to simple feelings by themselves, but to the relations which they have to their conditions, or to other feelings. The same sort of consideration applies to the particularity of feeling; a particular feeling is, again, a feeling related in a certain

<sup>1</sup> *Prolegomena to Ethics*, Sec. 50      <sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, Sec. 12.

way. Now this as it stands might seem to presuppose that feelings must at any rate first be felt before they can be placed even in a mistaken context; but its logic nevertheless points to a conclusion of a more radical sort. For if the sole meaning that attaches to the reality of anything is that it has a place in an objective order, nothing is left to the claim that the feeling is real as *felt*; and consequently by itself it cannot be said to be anything at all, and the entire nature which sensations have in experience belongs to them in virtue of their relations.<sup>1</sup>

This conclusion Green himself seems ready at times to draw more or less explicitly. (When we say that the reality of a feeling is in its relationships, we are saying that feeling as such is not real; for a relation between feelings is not itself felt. Or, still more subtly, let us grant that there undoubtedly is something in experience other than thought; feeling is other than thought. It is its otherness to thought that makes feeling what it is.) But that is saying, then, that relation to thought makes it what it is, so that it is nothing but a relationship after all.<sup>2</sup> The same sort of argument has already been seen to apply to the temporal character that is supposed to give individuality to feeling. Whatever feeling as such may be, the reality of the occurrence of feeling is not feeling, but the *fact that* it is felt; and the "fact that" is a non-temporal and relational fact, which does not itself pass away. For knowledge, then, sensible qualities are not sensations, but consist either in possibilities of producing sensations, or in the facts that such and such sensations are being produced;<sup>3</sup> and there is no reason to suppose that to their timeless conditions must be added something further in the way of feltness, since for the only sort of consciousness for which reality exists, the conceived conditions *are* the reality.<sup>4</sup> It may be conjectured that the common notion that an event in the way of sensation is something *sui generis*, is probably a mistake of ours arising

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Works*, Vol. I, p. 378.

<sup>2</sup> Vol. II, p. 181.

<sup>3</sup> Vol. I, p. 417.

<sup>4</sup> Vol. II, p. 191.

from the fact that we feel before we know what the reality of the feeling is, and hence continue to fancy that the feeling is something apart from its timeless relational conditions.<sup>1</sup>

15. If the outcome of all this is, as it seems to be, that the feeling aspect of experience can be refined away into bare relations, then we have indeed consistency; but we also have unquestionably a fatal break with common sense. And rather than accept this break, it would appear preferable to suspect some juggling in the argument. Is it not so, Green supposes an objector to urge, that the conditions of which we have been talking "are or include relation to feeling? True; but relations to feeling are not feelings."<sup>2</sup> True also; but how can we have a relation to feeling unless the feeling also is there to be related? One is constantly puzzled to place in Green's arguments the "mere" feeling that keeps cropping up; again and again it is proved that mere feeling is a fiction, and yet we find the phrase appearing whenever it is necessary to contrast sensation with its eternal conditions, or knowledge with its partial reproduction in connection with an animal organism. What is it that Green really intends here by feeling or sensation? The answer to which he appears to incline is one that may indeed seem in a way to help his case,—the answer, namely, that sensation is a process of change in the physical organism.<sup>3</sup> For since the organism, as a physical object, has already been reduced to an element in the eternal consciousness, we might appear at one blow to have thus got rid of the troublesome "psychical" fact of feeling as distinct from thought, and of the claims of time to be in any sense real, and so to have attained the desired goal of an eternal relational content. But also in so doing we have left behind even the appearance of a world in time, and of a progressive revelation of reality to finite selves.

16. It has been necessary to deal at length with Green's

<sup>1</sup>Vol. II, p. 190.

<sup>2</sup>Vol II, p. 191

<sup>3</sup>Vol. I, p. 12; *Prolegomena*, Sec. 67

metaphysical presuppositions, since, although the ethical interest supplies the motivating force of his philosophy, and colors always its results, it is upon his ability to provide for ethics a sound metaphysical foundation that he himself rests his case. Meanwhile his ethical theory is also not free from difficulties. The conception of moral goodness in terms of an absolute and all-embracing end, an ultimate perfection eternally realized, has two chances of leading us astray. On the one hand we might be tempted to argue that since the good already is complete, and I am what I am only because otherwise its perfection could not be, my duty is fulfilled, and I may lie back at my spiritual ease. To this outcome Green himself has not the least inclination, though he is saved from it less by pure reason than by his ethical earnestness. What to him the conception means is, rather, that because the perfection is so high, it should urge me on to greater effort. It is true we do not know precisely in what the perfect life consists. But the certainty that such a vast and emotion-stirring good is somewhere actual, is nevertheless the effective agent of progress; it renders us dissatisfied with any existing attainment, and fills us with a divine discontent that keeps us pressing forward.

But this second attitude also raises certain queries. It is not only that a good which in its nature is unattainable by us may, if we look at it too closely, lose its motive power; its very perfection renders it useless as an actual source of guidance. The idea of something absolutely desirable but other than any specific object of desire, of a supreme good which is no good thing in particular, tends, just by its attempt at inclusiveness, to lose its grip on reality, and to pass into idealistic vagueness. It is true such phrases might only mean that we are not to isolate individual ends, and take what is partial as if we could stop with it, and rest permanently satisfied. But Green means something more than this. In his predilection for a timeless whole, he feels that it is not enough

that we should find our good in a temporal process that goes on from one satisfaction to another, each desire and interest expressing adequately our needs at this particular stage; he wants a well-being that shall consist in a complete fulfilment of oneself in one timeless moment. And the consequence is that not only is it impossible to get any notion of what this can be like, but he even runs the risk of pointing us in the wrong direction. Green's doctrine here stands for a real and important aspect of the moral experience. But if the injunction to do one's best, while still recognizing that our best falls short always of the ultimate Best, be interpreted, again, not as a warning against moral stagnation merely, but as a reason for dissatisfaction with every possible stage of growth because it is not something—eternally complete attainment, namely—which it cannot possibly be, it is almost certain to direct our eyes away from concrete values and ends felt to be worth working for on their own account,—even though we recognize in words that these are needed to give content to life,—and to lead us to place the emphasis on characteristics of the moral experience, such as conscientiousness and spiritual aspiration, which bring to light that subjectivity of outlook from which it is difficult to free the notion of "self-realization." And therewith the ideal loses its quality of realism, and is sentimentalized. It gets out of touch with the actual world; it is tempted to look with disapproval on our "animal" nature, and the staple facts of human happiness; and it ends by encouraging a man to busy himself somewhat beyond the bounds of safety with comparisons of his own character with the perfect standard, with anxious inquiries "whether the heart is as pure as it should be," and with the cultivation of an attitude of "genuine self-abasement in the presence of an ideal of holiness." Whether the notion of a "better" is really strengthened by this reference to a "best," either metaphysically or spiritually, is at least open to dispute.

17. Meanwhile, in any case, it is clear that Green's stand-

ard of perfection, even if it offers motivation, does not constitute an actual source of guidance; and in view of this it gives a strong logical standing to a certain practical attitude to which the idealistic movement is in general quite definitely inclined. If truth is the revelation of an eternal self-consciousness whose activity lends to us whatever reality we possess, but whose full nature lies beyond our reach, wherein consists that partial knowledge of God on which we have to rely to guide us in affairs of duty? An answer is at hand; since knowledge is objective, the revelation of God is to be looked for in the past achievements and institutions and organized habits of society. But in that case the authority of custom would appear to be our only trustworthy guide, leaving it a man's highest task to keep "loyal in the spirit to established morality," and to perform "fully the duties of his station in life." Green's own ethical instincts are not wholly favorable to this conclusion; in his *Principles of Political Obligation*, in particular, his sincere respect for human individuality and freedom steers him well away from the goal to which he might seem pointed. And it is true of course that in theory he presupposes explicitly a constant progress beyond present attainment and present formulas. But nevertheless he finds it difficult to legitimize any rational principle of guidance for man, in his attempt at progress, that is not to be discovered in the accepted teachings and practice of the past. Progress goes on, to be sure; but it goes on under the influence of hidden forces. It is only when it has already defined itself in social achievement that we have any conscious source of control; human reason consists only in reflecting on these creations, themselves created unreflectively. Consequently in so far as man can reason about his conduct, he is wholly dependent on the principles of conventional morality, his individual conscience being but the presence of reason in him "as informed by the work of reason without him in the structure and controlling sentiments of society."



There is an element of truth in this, undoubtedly. If human nature holds possibilities that have not yet come to light, it is only by acting on faith in such possibilities, and not by a clear intellectual prevision, that their content can be defined. But the more we insist that these must always be embodied in accepted practices and opinions before they constitute Reason, the more impossible we make it to direct our lives through reason except by falling in submissively with what we find about us. Green has a method of escaping this conclusion; but it does not seem easy to apply it without going beyond his own professed standpoint. We are to separate, that is, the *principle* of progress from specific forms of life, and then use this principle to interpret and correct the conflicts between conventional claims. But the "principle" of institutions is no plain historical fact, as the institutions themselves are, but is intimately dependent on individual insight for its discovery; and the objective method can no more survive, therefore, the appeal to principles, than the authority of Scripture can survive the right of private judgment in its interpretation.

In spite therefore of his firm belief in progress, Green is led logically to the conclusion that all forms of authority are divine, since they are the actualized products of that world-reason which, in the absence of personal standards, we have no means of criticizing; just as, for Newman, Catholic dogma can never be an aberration, but is always an addition by way of further development. At least we are never justified in questioning institutional morality in favor of our private good; when authorities themselves conflict, the case is less simple. Green's discussion here is not very illuminating, nor without a touch of casuistry;<sup>1</sup> but the practical outcome appears to be that we should try to convince ourselves that in principle both are right, and so avoid an attitude of conscientious opposition to any established institution. Green, as has been re-

<sup>1</sup> *Prolegomena*, Secs 321 ff.

marked, when he comes down to questions of practice, has too keen a sense for human justice to live up to this ideal demand; but that only means that his instincts he never quite succeeded in reconciling with his theory.

18. In general, the criticism of Green in the preceding pages has come to this, (that in trying to justify an objective knowledge of man and nature as something we start with, rather than deduce from what is not knowledge—bare feeling, or nervous changes,—he has been led to substitute a logical skeleton of relational content for the actual flesh-and-blood world of concrete existences, including, in particular, the human self which, not as a string of disjointed feelings, nor as an active "principle"—identical with the source of all being, but as a plain reality in a world of realities, stands over against the objects which it knows.) If the criticism is justified, it is unnecessary, since it applies to them all alike, to stop in detail upon the imposing array of names belonging to the more orthodox section of the school of philosophic Idealism of which Green's activities were, among other influences, the occasion. Indeed Green is in a way less open to the criticism than most of his associates and followers, whose relation to Hegel is somewhat closer than his own. The two Cairds may be mentioned here in particular as, along with Green, perhaps the most influential protagonists of the idealistic movement. John Caird was a Scottish clergyman and powerful pulpit orator, who in 1873 became Principal of the University of Glasgow; his *Philosophy of Religion*, which seeks to reconstruct the traditional arguments for God's existence along Hegelian lines, is in some ways the most luminous and attractive single document that the school produced. Edward Caird's reputation rests in particular upon his monumental criticism of Kant, from the point of view of the later German Absolutism; and his academic teaching is of special importance in the history of the movement, and did a good deal to shape its formulas.

In accepting Hegel as their inspiration, both John and Ed-

ward Caird were led still more consistently to turn aside from any problems that may be present in connection with the apparent difference between the human and the absolute self, so that even Green feels this as a drawback in their version of idealism. Green's own *intention* had not been to make the identification too complete. Indeed, as has appeared, his ethics, in which his final interest lies, involves a strong emphasis on the incompleteness of God's presence in man; it is this which explains the rôle of the ideal in ethical experience. And accordingly Green proposes to rest his argument, not on the logical dialectic of thought, which he sees will be sure to suggest to the inexpert the processes of *human* thought, but on the structure of the objective world, and our inability to explain its unity without appealing to a synthetic activity which we only know as exercised by our own spirit; and a definite if rather sketchy attempt is made to account for the peculiarities of human thinking, by reference to the animal organism through which thought is tied to sensation, and so reproduced only piecemeal and imperfectly. But the essentially logical nature of Green's own interpretation prevents him from doing anything like justice to the duality which he recognizes, or from offering a satisfactory explanation of its possibility; and his notion of a "spiritual agent" distinct from the rational content which it unifies, though it has an apparent relevancy for ethics, in metaphysics starts more questions than it satisfies.

Accordingly in the Cairds, and in most of the other idealists, Green's peculiar emphasis is shifted,—though this does not prevent a general agreement with the greater portion of his argument,—and a more pronounced tendency is apparent toward Hegelian gnosticism. Reality is identified with the "rational" rather than with the "self"; and human reason is used freely to explain the nature of the Absolute, without any urgent need being felt to bother with the finite self, beyond stopping occasionally to explain that it is *not* human thinking,

but God's thought, that creates the world,—an attitude natural enough if the empirical self is defined as nothing but those elements of particularity in experience which Idealism has shown to have no genuine being. From this Hegelian standpoint, reality is to be conceived as an organic system developing toward the complete and self-conscious expression of that which is from the first implicit in it; and in Edward Caird, in particular, Green's interest in the ethical experience as a process of human self-realization tends to be supplanted by an objective philosophy of the historical evolution of human thought and culture, as the temporal unfolding of the life of absolute Reason or Spirit.

### § 3. *F. H. Bradley*

1. Of the three representatives of absolute idealism who would be generally recognized as having had the greatest influence on its later career, the first, and in some ways the most striking and original, is F. H. Bradley. The peculiarities of Bradley's metaphysics, as compared with Green's, have their start in the fact that he takes feeling seriously as a fundamental aspect of reality. The idealistic thesis that the world is a rational world still supplies his major premise; but "thought" is definitely rejected as a synonym for reality, and its place is taken by "experience,"—a term involving no such exclusion of feeling and will as thought naturally suggests. And it becomes accordingly no longer necessary or convenient to overlook the close connection of thought with human thinking; thought is not convertible with real existence, but belongs definitely to the world of finite appearance. Moreover, in attempting to adjust the two theses that reality is rational, and yet that it is more than thought, Bradley is led to accentuate the element of agnosticism already present in Green. Only while, for Green, God is unknowable not because he is unthinkable, but because of the deficiencies of our merely finite

thinking, in Bradley's case the failure lies in the essence of thinking itself. Thought sets an ideal of the rational—as that which is free from contradiction—which we must accept and trust if we elect to play the game of thinking at all; and it tells us how in outline its own demands are to be met. But in doing this it also reveals to us that we can reach the goal only by leaving thought as such behind; the heaven of the rational is to be attained by thought's voluntary immolation, and its resurrection in a new form as an aspect of a higher unity.

Bradley's conclusions are backed by a mass of subtle dialectic, aiming to show the lack of ultimate intelligibility in every concept that the human mind employs; nevertheless the general trend of the argument is relatively simple. We have first to note two presuppositions which serve everywhere as a touchstone for his results. These presuppositions are, that the only notion we can get of reality is in the form of experience, after the type that reveals itself in immediate feeling; and that this experience is in the end a single experience, the reality which transcends the present state of feeling joining on continuously to its edges, and forming with it an immediate feeling whole.<sup>2</sup> Bradley gives of course reasons to justify this faith; it comes to him very easily, however, and the heavy batteries of scepticism which prove so fatal to other philosophic convictions are only half-heartedly brought to bear upon it. Assuming, then, that reality is a unitary and self-consistent whole of experience, the task before us is to discover what can be said, if anything, about its more specific nature.

2. To determine to what extent thought can grasp reality, it is necessary first to examine the nature of the thinking process. English empiricists had gone on the assumption that an "idea" is nothing but a particular psychic existent, occupying a definite place in a series of conscious sensations and images; and the assumption had got them into numerous difficulties. Bradley recognizes that, as a cognitive term, an idea

is not a particular fact, but a universal. In thought, as he is accustomed to put it, content or meaning breaks loose from existence, the "what" separates from the "that," the idea from the image. There is indeed always a psychical image with which the meaning that constitutes the idea is somehow connected. But thinking has to do only with the ideal content of this image; and not with the whole content even, but sometimes with a very minor part of it. The empiricists had found difficulty in admitting the existence of universals because, recognizing nothing but images, they saw that every image must be a particular fact, with a definite, even though vague and fluctuating, character; and accordingly the notion of something that is not, say, any particular kind of triangle, but just triangle in general, becomes hard to understand. The difficulty disappears when we note that the essence of a universal consists, not in existence, but in meaning, or reference, or use. What the idea intends is not the image in my mind; only the abstract character of the image, or the part of it relevant to our intellectual purpose, enters into the distinctively cognitive fact.

Now the essence of judgment is, that in judging, such an ideal content, divorced from existence, is referred to reality. The favorite thesis that judgment is a relation between ideas misses this entirely. We do not judge about our ideas, but about the real; and this real is something that lies beyond the judging act, in the sense that it is not a part of its ideal content. The true subject of the judgment is, accordingly, not the nominal subject, which, equally with the predicate, can be expressed only in terms that are universals; subject and predicate together form a single idea, and this idea as a whole is taken as qualifying the real universe.) What is asserted in the judgment is that subject and predicate are bound together by a thread of identity which runs through their differences, and that this content, significant only because of the fact that the identity is not bare sameness, is assigned to a

background of reality, revealed not in the ideal aspect of "meaning," but in the "existence" side from which, in thought, meaning has been divorced—in feeling or perception. In immediate feeling-experience, and here alone, we come into direct contact with the real; apart from this, thought is a network of empty abstractions. Feeling is the aperture through which we get a glimpse of the real world. And in this point of contact all reality is implicitly contained. For feeling is not a mere blank. It holds within itself felt differences, though these are as yet below the surface of conscious recognition; if it were not for this, thought distinctions never could be made explicit. And in this way it furnishes a type of the reality at which thinking aims—a unity in difference coming home directly and unquestionably to immediate apprehension.)

But in this immediate form it fails after all to approve itself as fully real, because of its lack of permanence and self-completeness. Feeling is constantly shifting, tending to enlarge its boundaries and to pass into something else; while reality must of necessity be self-existent, substantial, individual. The purpose of thought is to mediate this self-transcendence, and to bring back in a more satisfying form the unity which is constantly breaking up. For this it makes use of the idea. The idea must have its roots in feeling, otherwise it would be a pure fiction; but it points beyond the immediate existence from which it springs, in the effort to extend this and supply its deficiencies. Experience thus everywhere shows broken edges which thought is trying constantly to mend by piecing on more and more of reality,—a reality always continuous, however, with the same real world from which, in feeling, we start.

3. At this point certain important consequences appear which it is the business of *Appearance and Reality*, Bradley's most ambitious book, to set forth. Notwithstanding the fact that thought has no meaning except in terms of reality, thought as such is not real, but ideal; and the world which it constructs

lacks the essential note of existence. It aims at reality; but in the nature of the case it can never reach its goal without itself suffering change. Thought works by way of relations; and relational thinking is always in the end self-contradictory. No judgment can be wholly true, unless it sums up all the conditions on which its truth depends; otherwise its opposite may be asserted also, and contradiction results. Thus the judgment "political liberty is a good," is only true when carefully qualified; and in the absence of these explicit qualifications it may be equally true to say that liberty is an evil. Human thinking, however, can in the nature of things never be thus self-complete. Discursive thought proceeds by way of analysis and synthesis. But in analyzing, I never by any chance can exhaust the background from which the act of analysis sets out; and I have no right to take a part as if it were the whole, and assume that what is left out would make no difference. The part certainly does not exist by itself; and we have no means of knowing that, if taken by itself, it could still qualify the sensible reality from which we have extracted it. This sensible phenomenon is what it is, and is all that it is; and anything less than itself must surely be something *else*. So also of the synthesis by which we endeavor to extend and complete the immediately given. The whole process here is mechanical, and incapable of restoring a genuine unity; by mere successive acts of addition we can never get an organic whole, but are led on continually with no assignable limit.

And not only do we find this so as a matter of fact, but there is a necessary inadequacy in the nature of relations which makes them incompetent to perform the task demanded, and leaves us with a mere conjunction that has nothing in it to satisfy the need for rational understanding. The difficulty appears in its simplest terms if we examine the ultimate connection between relations and the qualities they relate. Both of these are presupposed in the content of thought, and it is impossible to merge either of them in the other; how are we



to construe this situation rationally? Do relations really qualify their terms, or do they only stand between them externally? If they are independent of the terms, if relations are facts that exist between facts, then what comes *between* the terms and the relations themselves? Either the relation is nothing to the qualities, in which case they are not related at all, and have ceased to be qualities even, since there are no specific qualities where there are no differences; or else we have to find a new relation to bring quality and relation together, and are committed to an infinite process. On the other hand if we take the relations as actually qualifying the terms, we are no better off. Since the qualities must be, and must *also* be related, there is now a diversity that falls inside each quality. It has a double character, as both supporting and being made by the relation; and these different aspects are not each the other. But without the use of a relation it is impossible to predicate this variety of the quality; and *with* an internal relation its unity disappears, and its contents are dissipated in an endless process of distinction.<sup>1</sup> Reason will never be satisfied until, for this wholly unintelligible situation, we have substituted a unity which is a source of genuine rational insight, such that at every point the whole of reality is luminously present, and each single element has the power to develop out of itself the totality, instead of our being compelled to find the unity in the form of a brute fact of conjunction. And for this, relations must cease to be adjectives of their terms, and both alike must become adjectives of a more ultimate real wherein the separation of terms and relations has disappeared.

It follows then that thought, so long as we choose to think at all, can never abandon the effort to escape self-contradiction, and reduce the world to a rational and transparent whole; but also it cannot possibly, while it continues to be thought, and to move in the realm of relations, reach the end

<sup>1</sup> *Appearance and Reality*, Bk. I, Chap. 3.

at which it aims. The quest however is not unintelligible, because we have in the felt unity from which we start the type of what we seek. And by conceiving vaguely of a whole of immediate experience which no longer seeks to pass beyond itself,—because it now includes all reality,—and in which the relations which thought has uncovered,—all of which must contain their degree of reality,—are taken up into a higher and supra-relational form, more adequate than the sub-relational form of feeling, we have a standard by which, though concretely it remains inaccessible, we nevertheless can measure the relative truth of the various thought categories. For in thus reducing all that is real for our knowledge to appearance, we are not to be understood as turning it into mere illusion. Every distinction whatsoever is real in its degree, and has its place in the absolute whole; and while it must also suffer change as a member of this whole, the less of contradiction it contains, the less change it will need to undergo. (Thought, therefore, can at least arrange appearances in the degree in which they participate in reality; and this for practical purposes is sufficient.) If morality, for example, is unreal in the sense that in the Absolute it would no longer exist *as* morality,—a conclusion which our inability to rationalize the moral life completely forces us to admit,—it yet must exist there in *some* form; and it will continue to stand indefinitely nearer to reality than the immoral or the unmoral.

4. It will be unnecessary to stop here upon the fundamental assumption of Bradley's idealism,—that, in order to have the unity which knowledge requires, things must possess the special sort of unity that comes from being parts of a single whole of "experience,"—since the criticism that would have to be made upon this has already been suggested elsewhere, and will come up again in other connections. It is enough to call attention to the fact that Bradley's own doctrine of "appearance" emphasizes the point of doubt that may be raised. If our knowledge is appearance merely, which changes when it is approached

from the side of the Absolute, and if the Absolute alone is real, where is the limiting principle to be located which renders it appearance, and sets up a "finite center" capable of seeing things as they are *not*? Bradley argues the impossibility of answering this question, because to do so would imply that the finite is already viewing things from the standpoint of the Absolute; and in that consummation the finite must have been transmuted and destroyed. But the point of the question is, how there could be anything to begin with in possession of reality enough to stand in danger of destruction, unless one thing at least were left outside the Absolute—the "point of view" which prevents finite knowledge from being real. If for finite thought nothing can be wholly true, it is natural to expect the principle to work in the other direction also—for the Absolute nothing can be appearance; and for whom, then, if *not* for the Absolute? ✓

5. It will bring us however closer to the more distinctive aspects of Bradley's metaphysics, if we turn to two further assumptions which also underlie his argument. These are, first, that the reality which the judgment implies is the reality of *feeling*, or of the immediate perceptual experience; and, second, that the goal of knowledge is to become identified with reality, in such a way that the difference between itself and what it knows is broken down. Now is it—to stop briefly on this second claim—really the ideal of knowledge that it should endeavor to turn itself into a universe, so that in so far as it falls short of this it is defeated in its aim? This at least is to misread our usual view. The scientist who sets out to know a crystal does not have any ambition to become a crystal, or to become a world in which crystals are found. What he desires is to understand the ideal nature of something which he is all the time aware is other than his knowledge of it; and if he has any purpose in the end beyond the merely theoretical curiosity of a contemplative mind, this at least is not the mystical purpose of merging the identity of thought

and existence. It is a practical purpose; he wants to use the ideal knowledge which he gets to advance the active ends in which he takes an interest. And for this it is even necessary that his knowledge should *not* become reality. A human end is always a particular end, which adjusts itself to conditions other than itself; and for successful adjustment, it is essential that we anticipate the nature of the facts to be taken into account. Consequently it is the apprehension of character, rather than identification with existence, with which knowledge is concerned; knowledge is sought in order to prepare us for a subsequent encounter with existence when we are ready to act. Even a social end, where one might expect to find, if anywhere, the theory of identity verified, cannot dispense with a separateness of thought and things. A social end may to any extent you please see in other men the occasion of its own advancement, may identify itself sympathetically with their good, and recognize a common interest. But there must also be the ever-present realization that my fellows are themselves independent sources of action and centers of feeling, whose relation to me involves, not a merging of existence, but simply a unity of aim and sympathy mediated by my ability, through knowledge, to take up their nature ideally into my own life; and if this existential difference ever should break down, the experience would at once cease to be social, and become subjective and solipsistic.

All this implies, indeed, a sense in which, as Bradley says, discursive thought is only a subordinate aspect of experience, and points toward something more satisfying and complete. But what this means is, that thought alternates with action and enjoyment as a stage in a continuous process equally real with any stage so long as it is going on, and having its function to perform in making other and richer experience possible; it is not a mutilated portion of this more satisfying experience. It is worth remarking, also, that only when we lose sight of this connection of thought with action, can we suppose our-

selves able to rest content with appearance as a substitute for what really is. Knowledge is indeed always appearance in this sense, that it grasps the ideal content of the world, and not its very stuff and embodiment. But unless it grasped this content truly, of what use would it be for conduct? If my purpose is only speculative or mystical, I might perhaps be satisfied to recognize that in the Absolute my truth is transformed out of semblance to its apparent character, provided I had reason to suppose myself moving in the right direction. But if I am concerned to attain personal and practical ends—which include my very existence even—under circumstances where my success is dependent on reading aright the nature of the forces with which I am engaged, and where the slightest deviation may mean disaster, nothing short of a confidence that knowledge gives the actual essence of reality can serve me.

6. Now if one finds himself able to adopt this account of knowledge as the attempt, on the part of a being with specific ends of his own, to read into ideal terms the true nature of the world about him for the sake of furthering such ends, it perhaps will help make clearer the point next to be raised in connection with Bradley's theory of judgment. For Bradley, the reality which constitutes the real subject of the judgment is presented to us in the feeling fact itself, the perceptual experience as an experience; and the business of thought is to enlarge the borders of this immediately given bit of the existing world by detaching ideal content from it, and using this in the effort to bring back unity in a more adequate form. This however is not the natural interpretation. Grant that in knowledge the idea is not the psychical image, but an ideal content, and grant also that in judgment this content is always referred to the real world; just what is the reality which it intends to characterize? Surely, for the man engaged in pushing his ends in the face of surrounding helps and hindrances, it is the independent reality which he needs to know that he may take it into account, and *not* the feeling experience

which for the moment is himself. The thing which in knowledge I characterize by objective qualities is not the sensation as a feeling, or any extension of it, but the agent to which my organism has to adjust itself,—an agent which I am assured would be there no matter what happened to me or to the feeling. I may indeed scrutinize the feeling experience itself, and bring to light its limitations and its conditions; but then I am engaged on a different quest and with a different object—a psychological one.

It is true indeed that I may be said directly to meet reality only in sense perception, and that the universe is the extension of this point of immediate contact. But it is true in two different senses, which cannot safely be confused. The first meaning is, that my conscious experience, with its sensational content, is itself a portion of reality,—the only reality I am ever literally identified with. On the other hand, it is also true that only in *connection* with sensation is there revealed to me the presence of anything *beyond* this field of conscious experiences. And if we fail to distinguish this second claim from the first, we shall probably be led to regard the world of known reality which sensation mediates or reveals, as experientially continuous with the immediate reality of the sensation itself, since no form of contact with reality other than immediate identity has been recognized. But if we do allow a valid distinction here, the conclusion no longer holds. The feeling is indeed a reality necessary somehow to carry the ideal content which the knowledge function uses. And it is a reality which, when later it comes in turn to be recognized, philosophy is bound to find a place for in the universe; this is indeed just the starting point of the complications which idealism has been found trying to evade. But it is not *the* reality which perceptual knowledge is professing to characterize. For *knowledge*, the point of contact with the real world is not feeling, but the active forces, external to the organism, with which in feeling we find ourselves in contact.

7. Such a point of view does not forthwith resolve Bradley's logical difficulties about relations; but it eases to a degree the general situation. If it is no business of knowledge to go beyond appearances,—the “nature” of objects, that is,—then it does not stultify itself because it fails to merge with feeling, while still retaining its special relational character. It does not aim to *be* existence, but only to think existence truly—to take up into itself cognitively the ideal content which existence really has. And if it can accomplish this, there is no reason why we should refuse to say that in knowing reality as it appears, we know it as it is. Just because knowledge *is* appearance, it does not *know* appearance. It knows the reality which appears—which has, that is, the qualities and relationships that in the idea are, for a special purpose, and not on account of any cognitive inadequacy in us, given into our grasp apart from their embodiment in the existing world. Knowledge is not the outcome of a disintegration in immediate feeling, whereby both factors are mutilated and forced to look for some unknown form of reconciliation. To know is to apprehend the nature of an object presented to us, along with the recognition that this nature is not a mere fact of logic, but something that has an actual embodiment in the existing world; it is through this contemplative recognition of the settled presence of the ideal character in the real object, and not through the recognition of its relation to an immediate experience of feeling from which it has been provisionally estranged, that the reference to existence enters into the judgment. And there seems no reason at all why a description of the nature of a thing should be falsified merely because it is a description, and not the thing itself. It is true that the description is always partial, and therefore liable to be modified by other features yet to be discovered. But we have no ground for supposing that this completer understanding must needs turn our present knowledge into error,—that the elements of truth that we now possess might not persist, essentially un-

changed, as our knowledge is enlarged. Bradley's warning against regarding any aspect as real "in itself" takes advantage of an ambiguity; because a fact cannot really exist *by* itself, in isolation from the world to which it belongs, it does not follow that it may not be real *in* itself—may not in so far have, in the context to which it belongs, just the character that it professes to have.

8. To deal at all adequately with Bradley's destructive criticism of relations is impossible without becoming involved in an extended and intricate discussion. There is, one must grant, some justification for the complaint that discursive thought is in a sense artificial, and fails to attain the point of view from which organic unity springs. Thinking which passes from one link to another in an endless chain,—and all thinking that deals with particular facts of existence necessarily does this,—is in danger of missing something of the inner meaning of the real. Certainly the concrete particulars which make up the world can never be exhausted by a being who starts from a few isolated items, and attempts to piece these out by inference,—if for no other reason, because he cannot take a step in inference without adding thereby a new fact that calls for further attention. But if the world turned out to have some systematic character as a whole, there remains a chance that *this* might, in an abstract way, be grasped in thought. The suggestion of such a possibility is found in Bradley himself; why might not the higher reaches of experience—experience as it has become already modified by the results of thinking—furnish a type of the more intimate connection between things which we desiderate, and so provide a hypothetical form to be brought to the interpretation of the world, that escapes from the mere linkage of facts? The æsthetic experience is a promising example; here it is possible to hold that we have an instance of that luminous inner unity we are looking for, above relations in a sense, as mere feeling is below them. And from a realistic point of view, there is no



reason why this should not provide perfectly good knowledge so far as it goes. A non-discursive form of experience can, if we have once experienced it, later on be known, *provided* knowledge is not definable simply as a dialectical process, but includes the power to contemplate in their proper nature realities independent of the act of knowing, nor is there any reason why our relational thinking, even, should not be valid of it, though doubtless it cannot be completely exhausted by analysis. Because relations have thus entered into a significant whole, where each element is felt in its bearing on all the rest, they have not ceased to be relations; the relations which the critic discovers in a work of art are the same relations that he *feels* to be there before his critical apparatus is applied, or criticism would be wholly futile.

For Bradley, however, all this is excluded by the peculiarities of his thesis. Since relations by hypothesis have, in a higher experience, entered into a different context, for him they are no longer what they were; or, put differently, since logical thinking is not *of* reality, but *is* reality at a particular level, when it passes into a different form of experience it ceases to be relational, and so escapes all our categories. But after all the fact remains that we do have a knowledge of non-discursive forms of experience, and *must* have some knowledge of them if we are to talk of them at all; and knowledge cannot safely be defined in a way to make it impossible that we should know things that we actually do know. Meanwhile it is hardly surprising that Bradley himself should give up the attempt to realize the nature of the whole with the instruments which he leaves at his disposal; a world from which the self with all its purposes and experienced realizations has been discarded, and whose material is nothing but the mass of "finite centers" of experience fused in one unchanging unity of feeling, cannot be expected to reveal its secret to human thought.

9. There remain plenty of dialectical difficulties about the nature of relations, which it is not an easy matter to resolve.

One caution however should not be overlooked. It is hazardous to link relations together without regard to the empirical differences they show. The relationships that constitute "organic unity" are what give most plausibility to the claim that relations are internal to their terms. Where a unity of end or meaning is involved, this does actually permeate the terms in so far as they are members of the whole; the character of a hand as a hand would cease on its ceasing to be a part of the body, and the character of a note as entering into a melody would disappear if the melody were broken up into its constituents. But there are other instances where the case is much less clear; so far as appearance goes, the qualitative nature of red, for example, does *not* depend upon its relation to blue, but would be equally what it is were there no other colors to compare it with. Meanwhile, before we are intimidated by the threat of an infinite regress, the possibility deserves to be considered that, even if a relation is merely "found," it still does not require another relation to connect it with its terms, simply because it *is* a relation to begin with, and the nature of a relation is not to be related, but to relate.

#### § 4. *Bernard Bosanquet*

1. In certain important respects, Bernard Bosanquet may be regarded as a follower of Bradley, and his logical theory, in particular, is throughout influenced by Bradley's *Logic*. But on the other hand he is much closer to Hegel than Bradley was; and it is not always easy to reconcile the two strains. In spite of a general adherence to the metaphysics of his predecessor, the flavor of nescience has very largely disappeared. The justification of this change of emphasis is mediated by a use of the distinction, already suggested by Bradley himself, between discursive thought and experience. Bosanquet seems to hold, that is, to the possibility that thought in the narrow

sense can be precipitated and stored in more developed forms of experienced immediacy, and that our acquaintance with such thought-fertilized experience opens up therefore a chance that our thinking may not be so far removed from reality as Bradley had supposed. In this way he thinks it possible to maintain the fundamentally logical character of reality even in its concreteness and immediacy, while yet avoiding the criticism that charges the idealist with mere "intellectualism."

In appealing to experience as more inclusive than thought, then, we are not to understand that knowledge is to be deposed from its central place. The logical motive is still supreme for understanding the nature of experience; it is the logical *nisus*, the endeavor of a part to find its completion in a whole, which supplies the clue to all that is significant in the world and its development. The center of Bosanquet's philosophy, alike as logic and as metaphysics, is the conception of "individuality" as a systematic whole expressing itself in every part. Such an individual whole, by definition identifiable with the real universe in its totality, is alike the goal of knowledge, the end of conduct, and the supreme object of admiration and devotion. Against this stands the tendency, the root of most that is bad in philosophizing, to take as individual, as something essentially real, the starting point of knowledge rather than its outcome. True individuality means self-existence, self-dependence, completeness; and nothing can be an individual therefore beyond which there lie other things to limit it. Bosanquet's pages are a sustained polemic against splitting reality into parts, going back to the simple instead of forward to the more comprehensive, taking some supposed core of existence, such as sensations or finite selves, as truly real, and reducing the whole to a product of their unessential combination.

2. If this be taken simply as logic, there is one sense in which it represents a truth not apt to be disputed. If we try to understand at all, we are compelled to assume the intercon-

nection of things; and the more we know about this interconnection, the more we are likely to comprehend the full nature of any object in particular. For knowledge, stability and satisfaction are not to be found at the beginning, but in the larger vistas that free us from the narrowness of mere unmediated facts. And if we wish to call this total realm of things by the name of the Absolute, it may be a convenience in terminology. But the recognition that there is a whole of some sort does not, in so far, tell us anything whatever about the character of its wholeness. Conceivably we might find it, in a measure, a whole only loosely bound together in a relatively external way, a connection of reals existing in conjunction, and having relations such as those of time and space, similarity and difference, without the more intimate bonds that certain of our purposive and significant human experiences reveal. Of course wherever such a higher unity is found, it ought to be recognized; but logic, and the mere truism that the more we know about a thing the more we know its connections, does not require that of necessity we have to find it everywhere.

And it is not perfectly self-evident, even, that so intimate and comprehensive a unity is always to the advantage of the thinker. If we allow logic to have anything to do with that instrumental character which unquestionably is an aspect of empirical thinking, thought seems often quite content to stop with relative disjunctions and partial lines of connection. Indeed it is only as the knowledge of a general schema of reality, lacking in all but the vaguest recognition of its particular features, and satisfying spiritual rather than scientific needs, that any philosopher has ever been able to find a use for his ideal of a systematic whole; for science, whose interest is not to get a rapt vision of the divine purpose in its concrete totality, but to guide conduct aright, it is an actual gain to simplify the situation, and to take the immediately relevant connections in their separation from a context which quickly

becomes unmanageable. It is not easy to see how an attempt to view form and number in the light of their spiritual significance in the universe would advance the study of mathematics; and the more we override the specific serial ordering of events in the interests of reducing causality to a complete "sum of conditions," the less relation it bears to the work of actual scientific discovery. For certain types of conduct we need, to be sure, a very broad understanding of the world, to which nothing, so far as we can tell beforehand, may come amiss. But if we are going to appeal at all to the empirical needs of conduct, we ought to recognize that these needs vary, and are often met by exclusion rather than by inclusiveness. Indeed they are always so in some degree; an absolute vision of the whole in its concreteness would bear no relation to conduct, since if it could be realized conduct would be superseded. It seems most natural to interpret the whole belief in unity as itself a pragmatic demand, a presupposition of logic which is not itself susceptible of logical or metaphysical demonstration.

The first point of difficulty, then, concerns this transition from *a* unity, as a mere formal demand of thought, to the particular kind of unity which alone shows the marks of "individuality"—the unity of purpose, or—not to imply the temporal sequence which enters into human purposes—of significance, or spiritual meaning. Where do we get the assurance that the universe as a whole is a realization of spiritual value? It would be most consistent with idealistic presuppositions to suppose that we get it from an analysis of the accepted world of knowledge; but the facts do not bear out such a claim. That the content of *human history* progressively tends to embody such a unity of purpose, might be allowed; and accordingly idealism is always at its best when it is interpreting the world of institutional values. But, for any knowledge that we can safely presuppose to start with, human experience has its roots in a far vaster world, where not only does significance fail to reveal itself unambiguously, but where we are almost

surely led astray in practice if we try to import it. We may have our methods of reinterpreting this scientific universe to bring it into line with purpose; but at best the interpretation is a debatable one, and is not forced upon us by the plain facts of knowledge. It remains, accordingly, to find the source of our confidence in the formal demands of thought or logic; we may argue, that is, that full intelligibility is given to reality only in case we suppose the connected elements to enter into a significant whole, which unites them through the presence of a plan or meaning for whose expression they are needed. And undoubtedly we should like to see such an intelligible necessity in our thought constructions; but is it also a necessity of thought that this demand must needs be gratified? The claim on the part of a finite creature to a specific sort of intellectual satisfaction, no more than to a specific sort of emotional satisfaction, can be supposed to impose laws upon the universe, apart from an act of faith that goes definitely beyond the logical reason. If indeed it were ever safe to presuppose in philosophy that problems have been settled once for all, we might refer here back to Hegel; for Hegel has shown, it may be said, that a significant whole is the *necessary* outcome of the movement of thought, since only thus can we escape the contradictions that emerge on every lower plane. Most people, however, will be less sure than Hegel that two opposing statements "contradict" when they are taken *in different senses*, and in respect of a different aspect or relationship; and while no doubt the full truth will contain both aspects, they do not find it evident that this is bound to mean that they are taken up into a new and individual category. And that in any case Hegel has actually succeeded in capturing all the truth about reality for a single category, itself free from contradictions, a follower of Bradley at least can hardly be expected to maintain.

3. The point of this contention might of course be dulled if we were to accept the idealistic denial of any difference be-

tween the logical processes of thought and reality itself; and as Bosanquet is peculiarly insistent in this denial, some further remarks may conveniently be made upon it here. After making the necessary qualifications, we may grant the virtues of an ideal of philosophy which conceives it as an attempt, apart from the limitations of particular ends, to think the general nature of the universe as a whole, in a way that shall throw light upon the special concepts which the mind employs through a discovery of their implication in a more organic unity. From this standpoint, thought may be regarded as a self-dependent process whose driving force is the need to remove contradictions, and to displace the incoherency of a first view of things by an organized system requiring nothing beyond itself to render it intelligible. "Truth" is this systematic whole at which thought aims. Nothing in consequence can in this sense be wholly true, as Bradley had urged, except the Absolute itself; a lesser judgment that falls short of this has only a *degree* of truth, a degree that can be gauged by the success with which it gathers up and reconciles discordant elements. This means that no judgment possesses truth in its own right, but only by virtue of its logical connection with other judgments in a system; we call it true when its assertion leads to a completer harmonizing of the data than its denial would. On the other hand, no judgment is completely false; for it contains a logical content which it is obvious cannot be reduced to sheer non-being, and which consequently must find *some* place in the system which includes everything that is. The falsity of the judgment means that it is *partial*, as all human judgments are, though in varying degrees; and especially is it false when, being partial, it is taken by some one as completely true.

At best however it seems very doubtful whether this ideal of method, taken alone, serves fully any purpose other than that of a philosophic contemplation of the abstract character of existence. Whatever its aspirations, the "concrete universal" with which it really leaves us is one of concepts only, and

not of the concrete actualities of the existent world, with its particular contingent data. The problems with which Bosanquet is dealing are all of them problems of the logical interpretation of categories; and even if we do find these categories implicated in a system, it still remains a part of the business of philosophy to try to understand the actual complexity of the universe of particular facts and processes. And then we are once more met by the claim that *our* knowledge, and the things we know, are, concretely, two quite different facts within the universe, which it is one of the tasks of thinking to adjust. Accordingly if we start by denying the right to raise such a problem, it can only be because we are willing, again, to take the real world, and the realm of descriptive logic, as identical, and refuse to entertain the notion that thought has any significant connection with a finite thinker.

Now there is an important sense in which it may indeed be said that it is not man who judges, but the world that judges in him; true thought, that is, does not depend on personal caprice, but follows its own objective leadings, and we in a sense stand off and note the direction which it takes. This ignores, to be sure, the equally apparent fact that although, our premises once chosen, logic determines the conclusions we shall draw from them, it does *not* determine the selection of the starting point; and this, in a world too complex for us to start from everything at once, introduces a large element of subjectivity into the thinking even of philosophers. But in any case what legitimately follows, is only that the world is one where logical relations hold such as our thought can follow out, and not that logical processes as such constitute the movement of reality itself, and require no aid from a human thinker. Bosanquet seems almost on the point of recognizing the distinction here, when he grants that objective "meanings" can be entertained by the mind without being identified with reality. The explanation which he goes on to give of this seeks, indeed, to retract any dangerous admission, and to return to



pure logic; the world of objective reference, that is, and the world of reality, are actually the same world, regarded in the former case as composed of isolated though determined contents, and in the latter case as composed of contents determined by systematic combination in a *single* coherent structure<sup>1</sup>. But we still are lacking in an explanation of *how* these fragments can be held apart from reality, without acquiring a standing of their own as "ideas"; and in any case the fact is that our world of objective meanings has any degree of coherency demanded, and that the idea of the universe enters just as much into the convention of discourse as any other idea. If one did not have a theory to maintain, it would seem far more natural to say that the world of reality goes beyond the world of meanings, precisely through the fact that ideal characters there possess a status which is more than logical, and so stand existentially apart from the human thought about them. Since, Bosanquet remarks, the world of truth, and the world of meaning, are distinguished only as part and coherent whole, they are not really distinct, and logic investigates a single process of the whole which is the truth *or reality*. But whether truth, or complete logical content, can be identified with *reality*, is the entire point at issue.

4. By use of the same distinction, we may meet the paradoxes of the idealistic theory of truth and error. If "truth" has no other meaning than harmony and completeness of logical content,—and it need not be denied that it has this meaning among others,—then indeed there can be but a single truth; of human truths none are wholly true, or wholly false, and when an American humorist spoke of the report of his death as being exaggerated, he was unintentionally a profound philosopher. Here the implication is that truth moves wholly within the world of logical description; when I talk of the truth of anything, I mean *all that is true about it*, its complete explanation, and connection with the rest of reality. But truth, or

<sup>1</sup> *Logic*, Vol. I, p. 5 (2nd Ed.)

"trueness," has also a significance that adds to this a specifically human reference, and that presupposes a distinction between my thinking and the object whose nature I assume to know; and if a particular element of content really belongs, not to the world at large, but to the particular part of the world to which my thought intends to refer, then my judgment is true without reservation, regardless of what more may be true also. It is only certain kinds of truth that are seriously in danger of being "transformed" by the discovery of their wider connections. A scientific theory, such as the nebular hypothesis or the theory of evolution, or a social ideal that involves complex human purposes, we all recognize as likely to change in incalculable ways with the further growth of knowledge; but a categorical judgment of fact, if it is true at all, we may acquiesce in with the confidence that here is something that all theory must respect and leave in its integrity, whatever additional information about it may be forthcoming.

There may be good reason to hold that the *criterion* of truth, the intellectual test that tells us, when we are in doubt, what truths in particular are true, lies in the success with which a given claim enters without contradiction into that larger system of judgments which constitutes our already accepted knowledge of the world; truth can only be *tested* by more of itself, and not by something outside itself. But in this there is nothing inconsistent with the supposition that the entire system of ideal content which makes up the "what" of truth may be embodied in an actual world of existences. For the "coherence" theory, apparently, we begin with pure logical content, and progressively weave this into a pattern, belief attaching solely to the absence of contradiction in the outcome; it is quite as plausible to suppose that we start with an instinctive acceptance of certain characters in particular as belonging to an actual world which our practical lives need to presuppose, and that it is the force of this original belief, modified in detail by the success or failure of experimental action, which lends

to "facts" that categorical compulsion before which mere "systems" have to bow. For Bosanquet, the "correspondence" of thought with objects, which this separation of human ideas from existence would appear in some sense to imply, is taken always as reducing knowledge to *mere* copying, a useless reduplication of reality already complete; "the underlying question seems to be," he writes for example, "whether in cognition we are coöperating in the self-maintenance of reality, as ourselves organs within it, or are apprehending *ab extra* something finished and complete apart from us." There is no contradiction, however, between apprehending a reality as it already exists beyond the act of knowledge, and making a contribution through which reality is enriched, if only we take knowing in its natural context, and do not assume that it has no other function than either to *be* reality, or to repeat it. Thought effects its contribution by enabling us to reconstruct the world about us; but it can do this only in so far as it does adequately reproduce for thought the particular conditions which conduct has to take into account.

5. Waiving however epistemological difficulties of the more technical sort, and granting the right of the philosopher to attempt by ideal experiment to find some large and organizing concept which shall illuminate the darkness of the merely "given," and turn its fragmentary disorder into system, what are the actual merits of the particular solution which in Bosanquet's hands the principle of individuality supplies? That for him the finite human individual is not the clue to this insight has appeared already; the finite person shows his unreality by the way in which his life is forced to get its content by passing beyond its own narrow boundaries. The true individual is not the atomic and exclusive self, but the wider organic unity—the family, the state, art, religion—to which the self looks for its completion. It is this content of civilized and institutionalized culture which supplies the positive inspiration for Bosanquet's whole philosophy; it gives us the clue to the

nature of the Absolute, and from it man derives practical and ethical guidance for his life. The human self is merely the expression of one of the partial points of view which the richness of the absolute reality requires; it is the "spirit of the whole working in and through a limited external sphere." This means that, on the side of its finite limitation, the conscious life is to be thought of as identified with certain conditions in the physical world which give rise to what we know as an animal body. But these conditions it redeems from their mere externality. It brings to light their implicit meaning as a part of the one significant system; moulded by nature, it elicits nature's spirit, a secret even from itself, and thereby forms the medium through which the absolute experience expresses an essential aspect of its being.

6. On its more verifiable side, as an interpretation of the inner significance of human experience, such a conception of the self is, up to a certain point, both true and important. Clearly there is a sense in which a man's true self is not his separate self-identity; it involves relations to a larger whole. Bosanquet, however, insists on interpreting this in a particular way; and if the interpretation is not accepted, the sole alternative he will allow as possible is the conception of man as a bare unit, an "exclusive and repellent personality," with no significant connection with the rest of the universe. And the reason for his inability to conceive any middle ground between total absorption and total isolation, rests again on the identification of reality with logical content. Naturally if we reduce reality to logical truth, and truth to significance, we shall be able to assign no sense to any claim to exclusiveness of existence, except as we suppose it to deny the presence of significance or meaning altogether. And if we decline to adopt so desperate a course, then the institutional realms of the state, of religion, of art, since they undoubtedly possess significance, will be real *in the same sense* in which the self is real; only they are more real, being more inclusive. And in this way the

self turns into a mere phase of institutional experience, with no existence, and no rights, and no destiny, save as these are conferred by the superior ends which it helps express; the finiteness of the self stands for mere powerlessness, mere limitation,<sup>1</sup> and has as such no significant rôle. In a rather surprising passage Bosanquet frankly puts this absorption of a human self in the "truer" self of the social whole, on exactly the same level as the absorption of a philosophical system in one that is logically more adequate.<sup>2</sup>

But to interpret finite individuals as "connections of content" within the real individual to which they belong, and their existence as only the "status of being an appearance"—the partial aspect of a logical whole,<sup>3</sup>—simply does not match with our convictions about what a self is. Of course again there is an undeniable sense in which the "reality" of a man is more than his bare existence. But if the being of a self is worthless in separation from its social content, significance vanishes equally in the absence of an individual self-identity and existence; a necessary implication in the very value which transcends a human soul, is the fact that all values are meaningless apart from that conscious *appreciation* of value which only finds a place, for any natural way of thinking, in personal beings. Bosanquet's emphasis is 'n one aspect of it wholly justified. Value is not mere feeling, but has a definite and objective content; and as active and practical beings, it is the last to which our attention ought chiefly to be directed. But this content nevertheless presupposes all the time,—we can overlook it because it *is* thus present always,—that there is called forth in us by the object of value a feeling attitude, without which "appreciation" would turn into a mere colorless recognition of fact.

Bosanquet's ability to ignore this is due, one may suspect,

<sup>1</sup> *Value and Destiny of the Individual*, p. 56

<sup>2</sup> *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, Vol. XVIII, p. 503

<sup>3</sup> *Philosophical Theory of the State*, p. 181; *Logic*, Vol. II, p. 258.

to an ambiguity in the term value, or significance, to which his preoccupation with logic tempts him. For "value" is clearly identified by him at times, and perhaps fundamentally, with *logical* value, or implication in a logical system; and between this and "felt" value there is nothing whatever in common, save as logical system may itself become an *object* of value, æsthetic or practical, if we introduce again the relation to a self capable of appreciating it in feeling terms. And this furnishes an explanation for the peculiar fact that, when we forget differences of terminology, the actual content of Bosanquet's system, with its repudiation of the "psychical," and of the human form of purpose even, often approaches very closely indeed to the "naturalistic" foes of idealism, and leaves the Absolute as a mere theatre for the interplay of natural forces, having no community either with the "self" of Green, or with the God of religion.

7. In the end, however, considerations such as these probably will have less weight with us than judgments based on our immediate sense of values themselves. And there is a type of mind that always will draw back from this constant disparagement of the finite self, from the insistence that the human will is nothing but a medium through which the universe expresses itself, that freedom consists only in subordination to social and spiritual institutions, that the destiny of individuals has no ultimate significance, and that in the sentimental impersonalism of Dante's treatment of Beatrice we have the highest way of dealing with the fact of human personality. We apparently possess no logical instrument such as will enable us to appraise authoritatively the difference in appeal which values make; in a competition of ideals, one can only set the rivals side by side. In Bosanquet's ideal the chief persuasiveness, but also its deficiencies in part, lies in its aristocratic qualities. Since the fate of the lower experience is to be absorbed in the higher, where alone it has significance and truth, we are called upon to live always under tension,

at the highest level to which our insight can attain. The universe we are to conceive as a "place for soul making"; and the essence of soul quality is not pleasantness, or comfortable-ness, or mere goodness even, but greatness and splendor, the "union of austerity and passion." To raise in this sense the level of life justifies civilization, quite apart from any happiness that individuals may secure; indeed the more deeply we see into the truth of human nature, the more we recognize that pain and evil will always be necessary to give life its proper elevation and consistency. Evil is here not to be eliminated, but to be surmounted, to be woven into the texture of experience so that life may possess that tragic quality without which it will seem mean and trivial to the aristocratic mind.

And this suggests what on the whole would appear to be the most fundamental point of view from which Bosanquet's ideal of value is to be approached; it is constituted by the æsthetic interest, rather than the ethical. Even in his logic the ground is set for a certain indifferentism towards evil. Since truth is not the rightful attributing to reality of specific qualities under the lead of our vital interests, but only a matter of somehow getting all possible content into a single comprehensive judgment, we are bound to recognize that there is something to be said for every claim and every counter-claim. "Error" is not to be repudiated, but absorbed; all varieties of relative points of view and one-sided emphasis come together in the one ultimate experience of reality and value. Now this is not an attitude that falls in easily with the special interests of the moralist; and indeed in theory it appears that the Absolute cannot as such be ethical, though ethical values are present in it. The final truth of the world is not that it is good, but that it is the wider set of conditions out of which the good life arises, the theatre of *all* the wealth of experience, with good and evil alike playing their part. Evil, that is, is not absorbed in good. It is absorbed in *perfection*, where it still retains a positive function; and perfection is a higher concept

than the good, which last belongs definitely to the stage of finite experience, and not to reality as a whole. Even religion, therefore, is in the end unreal. Religion means the will for good as *against* evil; and a universe in which this antithesis is absorbed in perfection, cannot be identified with a God who represents one-sidedly the triumph of good alone.<sup>1</sup>

For the revelation of this higher point of view we are referred, though not without some hesitation, to the æsthetic consciousness. The Absolute is the great Artist before whom the drama of human existence, of good in conflict with evil, is staged; and the highest attainment of human perfection is to purge oneself of human claims, and, in the spirit of tragic austerity, to catch this same vision of life, and admiringly to call it good. More precisely, two motives may be distinguished here—the dramatic and the logical; though in both the æsthetic appeal is almost equally present and constitutive. That acceptance of reality without rebellion or repining which has so large a place in Bosanquet's spiritual ideal, is not the realistic acceptance of "fact," as something which, since we cannot change it, it is the business of the wise man clear-sightedly to adopt and build upon. Such a factual reality it is necessary to recognize if our lives are not to be futile; but there is no particular reason to idealize it as perfection. What alone justifies the title is rather, in the first place, the æsthetic value that resides in the logical completeness of the system of reality, in the presence of which a subjective wilfulness has no standing. And accordingly from this point of view evil persists, redistributed and resystematized, in the Absolute, precisely as there is supposed to be room in truth for the elements of error; it is a solution of the problem of evil in terms of logic. Of course however what this really means is, that no *qualities* of life are wholly valueless in their proper place.<sup>2</sup> And accordingly such a solution falls short in an essential point; moral

<sup>1</sup> *Value and Destiny of the Individual*, pp. 216 f., 250.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 217



evil consists not in the raw material of desire and instinct, but in an active attitude. This attitude of will is what the dramatic concept now restores, by turning the world of mere logical completeness into an active play of forces. But since thereby the latter world becomes primarily a value, not for the actor who strives to overcome evil, but for the spectator who finds in it the positive source of his emotional exaltation, the ethical interest tends necessarily to subordinate itself to the artistic.

8. There is to be sure an ethical turn that we may give to this, if we suppose the gaze of the spectator to be shifted from a contemplation of the universal drama to his own inner life. So interpreted, the highest good comes to be found, not in removing evil, but in retaining all the ills of life while getting rid merely of their blindness and irrationality; in transforming "brute agony and dumb endurance and despair into spiritual conflict and triumph," and raising suffering to the level of tragedy. And such a triumph over necessary evil is no doubt an essential ingredient in the spiritual experience. But it is not clear that we can afford to stop with this, and leave life at its highest on the level of tragedy. To begin with, one runs always a risk of attitudinizing when he contemplates his own career as "tragic." It is hard, too, not to suspect that the high perfection of tragedy is more apparent when one is himself comfortably seated in the audience, free from the poignancy of the tragic situation. And at least this insistence on a "great and splendid" life has the drawback that it is apt to generate a blindness to the milder and humaner virtues, and a disposition to look with something like contempt upon the human weakness which limits the power of most men to play the rôle of tragic hero.

This lack of sympathy is particularly apparent in a practical attitude toward the world of individual "claims" which there has already been occasion to note as implicit in the natural logic of the idealistic school. Bosanquet has little but impa-

tience with the prevalent discontent with the social structure, the crusade against political and industrial injustice, the emphasis on the right to individual opportunity and happiness. The cry against injustice is a weak and pessimistic complaint against the universe, which our feeble minds are quite incompetent to sustain; with the existence of evil justified in principle, we ought to see that it is unreasonable to try to set limits to the degree in which evil is called for by the needs of perfection, or to mark off certain evils as undesirable and deserving of extinction.<sup>1</sup> In any case, for the individual to set up a claim against the whole is to reverse the true notion of individuality, and to subordinate reality to appearance. The duty of man is to awaken to his own nature, and his unity with the greater Mind, rather than to mould the course of the world as an independent cause; <sup>2</sup> instead of "arbitrarily preferring some one element of experience to the whole," and setting out to weight the scales in its favor, we should welcome whatever comes to us,—or to others,—and aim only to assign it its true relative importance in the perfection of the universe. Ethics and religion join hands in assuring us that true peace and excellence lie, not in self-assertion, not in individual striving even for the good, but in offering oneself as a contribution to the true being of the universe, in accepting correction from the world and adjusting oneself to its requirements, in cultivating a "genuine devoutness and loyalty before which the given self seems a little thing, and lightly to be sacrificed for the chosen transcendent good." Politically this means that the individual ought to be subordinated to the social will embodied in the habits and institutions of his community. Such a will, to be sure, is imperfect; but it is imperfect only because it is *incomplete*, and not because it ever takes a radically wrong direction, or shelters injustice and oppression which the individual reformer, seeing in this instance more truly, may set himself to eradicate. If Objective Mind is incomplete, at least it is

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 157 f.    <sup>2</sup> *Principle of Individuality and Value*, p. 158.

always *more* complete than ideas which rule any individual mind; and the latter has accordingly no standing in court when the two conflict.<sup>1</sup>

The inference is a fair one; but only again in case we accept the logical theory on which it rests. The social structure does contain more truth than any individual mind is likely to compass; it has a many-sidedness which only very laboriously, and never quite completely, our private speculations trace. And if breadth of compass is the only mark of truth, and error means only incompleteness, then the smaller scope of the individual mind is decisive as against his right to criticize the social order. But a more natural view of error would allow us to regard the attributing of some particular content to reality as actually true or false without reference to a knowledge of the whole; and, consequently, it would justify the probability that the individual mind may be superior in insight to the General Will on this or that matter of detail, although it would condemn as rash the rejection of social experience in its entirety, and an attempt to replace it wholesale by the efforts of the private reason.

9. As the perfection of the Absolute is gained by a refusal to consider the human self as an existent, so Bosanquet is enabled by the same method to construct a theory of the relation of the self to Nature which avoids any touch of the dualism he is anxious to escape. The solution comes by reducing the substantial facts of physical process at work independent of, and prior to, the advent of man, and of the psychological as a distinctive new content with an existential status, to logical formulas—the formula of “externality” on the one hand, and of significance or “interpretation” on the other. In this way the conscious life becomes nothing, which it is necessary to adjust to body, but merely the realization of the meaning already implicitly present in the physical,—a “supervenient perfection” which constitutes the method by which the Ab-

<sup>1</sup> *Philosophical Theory of the State*, p. 123.

solute enhances experience for itself. Finite consciousness is only an awakening to the significance of a certain realm of externality to which it serves as a center; it has nothing of its own but the "active form of totality," and everything positive it derives from nature.<sup>1</sup>

If nature means here what it does to the scientist,—and we have no right to take it otherwise,—this claim that no new content, but only a higher degree of relational unity, is present in the realm of mind, is not very easy to understand. To say for example that painfulness is not a new qualitative effect appearing on the occasion of a physical prick, but only the "interpretation" of the prick, the "appreciation of what is happening,"<sup>2</sup> seems little more than a form of words, which simply turns aside from the peculiar essence of the fact to be explained. If by "appreciation" here we mean awareness merely, we are translating the entire *content* of the conscious life into terms of intra-bodily movements; and this, apart from other difficulties, is at least strange doctrine for an idealist. If on the other hand, as supposedly is true, appreciation is meant to have a reference to "value," we find ourselves again drawing on the ambiguity previously noted. The value of a work of art, which is the analogy that Bosanquet has in mind, may intelligibly be spoken of as something realized *in* a content, and not a new form *of* content. But this is because the work of art, with its given logical structure, can make a peculiar impression on an observer; and there is nothing analogous to an observer in the mind-body situation, unless indeed we are ready to conceive of the human mind as a picture painted on the background of nature for an eternal Connoisseur.

And even the verbal solution will not work in the end, except as it tacitly abandons the conviction from which the problem springs—the existence of a real world antecedent to human

<sup>1</sup> *Principle of Individuality and Value*, pp. 160, 367.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 197.

experience. Externality has no meaning for the Absolute, we are told, except as it passes through finite minds. The natural world is nothing but the system of all individual experiences; it lives only in the efforts of all spiritual beings to sustain a unity of experience, taken in their completeness as successful.<sup>1</sup> "Our" world is just our objective experience itself, conceived as playing a part in the self-maintenance of the eternal whole which absorbs all possible facets of reality. At best, the question what becomes of the object when unexperienced by finite minds is a "minor matter," which it is unnecessary to pursue. Of course if nature is nothing but a form of finite experience, of a relatively low degree of internal unity and meaning, through which mind passes to constantly more significant wholes, then the problem of explaining how a human mind can know a world existing as a prior condition of human experience will be solved by elimination; and the task of reducing all reality to terms of cultural significance becomes much simpler.

### § 5. *Josiah Royce*

1. In Josiah Royce, the most eminent of the American idealists, a new and original turn is given to the idealistic program, whereby the logical motive, hitherto chiefly in evidence, loses its predominance, and a much closer approach is made toward dealing with the actual difficulties that confront the realistic mind. (Royce keeps throughout close to the ground of empirical reality, and is largely free from that disposition to hypostasize logical concepts which Hegel's influence fostered. Instead of tacking on finite experience, as the English Hegelians had for the most part done, to an Absolute already fully characterized in terms of timeless logical content, and having therefore no obvious room for it, he starts by taking the finite fact seriously as a bit of real existence.) That apparent character

<sup>1</sup> *Logic*, Vol. I, p. 84.

which knowledge possesses in the shape of a reference beyond itself, instead of being slighted, now stands as a necessary step in the argument; while also for the first time a central place is given to activity or will, as against mere thought or intellect on the one side and feeling on the other. So to the difficulties arising out of the relation between the finite and the absolute,—for the most part treated very cavalierly by the English idealists,—Royce keeps returning constantly. Even the timelessness of reality, which seems ordinarily to make so hopeless any chance of reconciliation between metaphysics and everyday common-sense, is interpreted and defended, not in terms of the repugnance of pure logic to the time process, but on the empirical and psychological basis of the experience of duration, wherein time distinctions are transcended.

2. Royce's argument sets out from the common-sense belief that our ideas point to a reality beyond themselves and their own content. This postulate seems involved everywhere in our natural understanding of experience, though a critical examination shows that it is not without its difficulties. How can a state of mind know what by definition is not present to that state of mind? Must not an object somehow be already in my possession if I am to mean, or intend it? How can I be certain that my knowledge hits the mark, that it corresponds to the reality I mean it to correspond to, if this reality is wholly out of reach, and beyond the possibility of testing? And yet, on the other hand, if the object which I know be taken, not as something beyond the knowing experience, but as the very content now present to the consciousness of the knower, we have indeed escaped the former difficulty, but only at the expense of a thoroughgoing relativity which breaks down all distinction between truth and error. For if the object about which I judge is just my own meaning or interpretation, then I can never be mistaken; and in consequence no such thing as objectively valid truth exists. What any man believes to be true *is* true for him, since he is judging about an object open

immediately to his own inspection; and his judgment cannot come into conflict with that of his neighbor, because no two men judge about the same object.

It is impossible, however, to rest in a doctrine of absolute relativity; for one thing, as the very phrase suggests, it contradicts itself. Our thesis is that there is no absolute truth, but that what each man thinks is true, for him *is* true. But then what of this truth *that* there is no absolute truth?—is this also true only for the one who thinks it? Meanwhile it may not be impossible to make sense after all of the claim of an idea to “mean” an object. There is one situation in which such a claim is sufficiently intelligible,—when, that is, I later succeed in getting an experience which fulfils the intent of my earlier meaning. Here the relation of correspondence between idea and object loses its opaqueness, because the two have now come together within a single unity of consciousness where they can be compared, and the justice of the claim tested. And it is only in this way that the possibility of error can be explained. If we take any single judgment by itself, error is excluded by the fact that the object of which we judge is for us precisely what it is, and nothing else; error has meaning only in terms of a wider judgment which is able to take up into itself the narrower one, and note its deficiency. I find myself in error, therefore, when a wider reach of consciousness reveals the partial character of a previous judgment; and I can conceive the possibility of error even when as yet it has not been thus corrected, in terms of an ideal spectator whose range of consciousness shall include mine, along with whatever in addition is necessary to correct my one-sidedness.

Truth and error, accordingly, are both definable, have meaning, only on the basis of a unity of consciousness which brings the judging idea into connection with its intended object, and so reveals the presence or the absence of the correspondence which the idea claims. And not a mere possible, but an actual consciousness is demanded, since *mere* possibility, facts that

are not facts for someone, ideal determinations not embodied in a "that," it is impossible for the mind really to conceive. Let us doubt then to the uttermost. But doubt, if it is not to be a word without meaning, at least must assume the possibility of error, and so the existence of a conscious life in which the answer to our doubt is a present reality; unless thought and its object are parts of a larger thought, I cannot even so much as doubt. Accordingly whoever has a belief, whether true or false, about objects beyond the moment of belief, is thereby shown to be an organic part of a reflective and larger self; and thus we have the assurance of reason for the existence of a single universal Thought,—since, if we try to think it as manifold, this manifoldness would still be a truth that must be true for a more comprehensive unity,—in which all possible questions that mean anything at all receive their perfect solution.

3. The second stage of Royce's philosophical development is in a way already implicit in his doctrine of meaning; but it did not get full expression until he was confronted by the need for meeting certain ethical objections, based on the apparently precarious standing of the finite individual, and his moral life, when reality is reduced to a single absolute of thought. The form which the problem takes is that of accounting for the individual, or of finding the principle of individuation. For Bosanquet, also, the individual forms the central problem of philosophy; but in his case an interest in the finite person is almost wholly confined to showing that this is *not* an individual in the truest sense. Royce on the other hand, owing to his greater preoccupation with the moral life, is concerned primarily to explain how there comes to be this unique focussing of reality in human selves, while at the same time safeguarding its genuine significance in the world.

And the solution takes the form of assigning to Will, and to the concept of purpose, a place in the structure of reality hardly suggested in his earliest writings. In God, it has appeared, all possible questions are answered, all possible ideas



fulfilled. If we were content with a merely logical universe, there would perhaps be no great harm in leaving the matter here; but we have elected to start from a real world of existences, over against the innumerable ideal possibilities which have no existential standing, but are hypotheses contrary to fact. Now in mere thought, which alone we have so far been using to interpret the Absolute, there is no ground for the preference of any one world over any other. All are equally possibilities present to the divine consciousness; and some new principle needs to be added to the intellectual one, if we are to explain the superior reality of the one existing world. This principle, then, Royce finds in Will. The essence of will he takes to be the act of attention which singles out a determinate aspect of content, leaving the rest in the background; and in order to explain the fact of the one preëminently real universe we need to postulate such an act of selective attention, whereby a specific system of ideas is realized while others are left as mere logical possibilities,—an act that from another angle may be regarded as the divine Love, which sets up an object of preference unexplainable on merely theoretical grounds.

And now the same principle leads to a theory of the human self also, and to the justification of his significance for the life of God. The uniqueness of a self, no more than the uniqueness of the real world, can be understood in purely theoretical terms. Every idea without exception is a universal; and consequently there is no way in which we can define it so as to limit it to a single exemplification. It is only as a thing is the one thing that will satisfy an *interest* that uniqueness has a meaning; it presupposes a particular and determinate purpose, for which no other object could be substituted. (In passing, the question may suggest itself what constitutes that uniqueness of a *purpose* which here seems to be assumed,—its relation to the satisfaction of another purpose?) Now the unitary world-whole is differentiated into many confluent purposes; and a self is precisely such an idea, or plan, or interest, demanding

a specific form of fulfilment. But while the self has thus no reality outside a higher individual life which embodies all the wills represented by finite ideas, nevertheless these finite selves are not swallowed up and abolished in the divine life. If they are dependent upon God, so equally is God dependent upon them, since without the specific contribution that each one makes, God would not be what he is; and as God's will is free, an autonomous act lying deeper than the phenomenal world of causal connection, so each self shares in this freedom, and nothing except his own choice in all the universe determines him.

4. In the light of this conception, Royce reconstructs his original theory of knowledge, by assigning explicitly to cognitive meaning a teleological or pragmatic character. The interpretation of the connection of idea and object in terms of a fulfilling experience, is translated into the more specific form of a relation to plan or purpose; and Royce tries to show how the "external" meaning—of correspondence—is reducible in the end to an "internal" meaning of teleology—the consciousness of how I propose to act. The object of knowledge is thus nothing but a specific end, already present implicitly and partially in the idea, which gets its explicit fulfilment in that wider consciousness of the Absolute where both the purpose, and its realization, alike are present. The proof consists partly in an attempt to show the absurdities of a realistic view of being, which proposes to accept as final the notion of correspondence between two independent entities, and partly by an ingenious use of the evidence for a close relation between knowledge and will. Thus it undoubtedly is true that knowledge is a "nascent deed," in the sense that ideas tend to pass over into appropriate action; and this pragmatic relationship is at least not wholly irrelevant to the definition of the object itself, since it is a part of the concept of a knife, for example, that it is used for cutting. Again, it is a connection with active interest that alone explains why our attention singles out this or

that object in particular, refers to or means it; even the abstract constructions of science may be called an embodiment of our purpose of convenience in explanation. And by a subtle use of the symbolic character which the "image" may have in knowledge, and of the fact that different symbols may be useful under different circumstances,—the requirements of mathematics, for example, being hindered rather than advanced by concrete imagery appropriate in other situations,—the character of correspondence, even, is made definable in terms of purpose, the sort of correspondence to be demanded of the idea being determined by the intention of the idea itself.

5. Only a brief word needs to be added about Royce's more recent writings, since they show a shift of emphasis rather than any essential difference of doctrine. The concept of the "social" had from the start played an important rôle in his thinking. Thus the world of nature is altogether a social product, as that which forms the common element in a universe of discourse; and even to God we are related only through our fellows. In his later years this notion of the Community, conceived as a higher form of selfhood, "as truly a human being as you and I," and superior in value as in extent, has a tendency to displace in emphasis the remoter Absolute. In particular, this takes the form of an exaltation of the idea of "loyalty" as the supreme ethical value,—concretely, a loyalty to the community regarded as a more inclusive Person, but sublimated for philosophy into a loyalty to the spirit of loyalty as such. Waiving the doubtful point as to whether it is possible or wise, either theoretically or practically, to enlist morality so strongly against that spirit of individual liberty which claims the right to keep in check the organized power of society, Royce's doctrine may be regarded as an enforcement of one moral duty in particular—the cultivation of an attitude of "good-will," as supplying the necessary condition on which the solution of most concrete moral problems is dependent. The same teaching underlies Royce's latest formulation of his metaphysics in

the theory of "interpretation," with God as the Great Interpreter,—a restatement of his fundamental absolutism which is rather more edifying than it is closely reasoned.

6. Royce's entire philosophy evidently rests upon the cogency of his initial argument for idealism. The point of the argument is, to repeat, that neither truth nor error is intelligible save as the idea which has a meaning, and the object which it means, come together in a single unity of experience, where the latter is seen to be a fulfilment of the former. And the necessity for such an inclusive consciousness rests mainly upon two points: Royce endeavors to show that the ordinary notion of the independence of the object of knowledge is untenable, and that its claims are satisfied, and better satisfied, by a different interpretation. This latter argument takes its start from the doctrine that had become a commonplace in English empiricism. If we have made up our minds that all reality must be reduced to experience, as against the existence of an independent world, then the only meaning of the statement that an object is real when I am not perceiving it is, that under such and such conditions the experience can be secured. Such an argument, however, gets a compelling force only in case we have already given up any faith in a contemporaneous object existing when it is not perceived. It is a legitimate hypothesis, and may turn out to be required as a substitute for our first belief; but it is an hypothesis which presupposes the bankruptcy of the more familiar notion of perceptual knowledge. Royce introduces it with a clear recognition of its hypothetical nature; but as he goes on he insensibly tends to drop this recognition, and to take it as the only verifiable interpretation, ignoring the fact that at least it has changed essentially the original situation that called for explanation. For the occurrence of a future experience—the only thing that is really "verifiable"—is distinctly *not* what we ordinarily think of when we talk about "objects." It is one thing to mean a "real" object now existing, and quite an-

other to mean a sensation or perception that will later on exist; we have knowledge in both cases, but knowledge of two very different facts.

The departure from our everyday convictions is still greater in the more developed form of Royce's doctrine. The relation of a purpose to its fulfilment does not in any sense represent our first understanding of what is intended by the relation of an idea to its object; the thing which we suppose ourselves to know, we readily distinguish from the end of knowledge, to which end it stands normally as a condition or a means. A purpose will indeed usually be present; but even the act of attention which selects the object—itself also distinguishable from the object it selects—is not identical with this purpose, but rather is dependent on it. This empirical difference between knowledge and the end it serves, it is almost impossible to overlook where overt and practical purposes are concerned; and it holds even of the intellectual purpose in the narrow sense. We have, to be sure, a desire to know, which is satisfied when knowledge is attained; but the relation between this desire and its satisfaction is not the relation between the idea and the object, but presupposes already the object's existence.

The hypothesis, then, can plausibly be taken as established, only in case we have first gained the right to discard the more natural belief, as Royce indeed is ready to allow; whenever the failure of his teleological terms to satisfy our common prejudices becomes too apparent, he is accustomed to call attention to the fact that the only alternative lies in an acceptance of the notion of independent objects, and that such a possibility has already been excluded. The backbone of the theory is thus the refutation of realism; but this refutation turns out to have peculiarities which limit its power to convince the realist himself.

Royce sets out by defining the realistic conception of reality as the total absence of relations.<sup>1</sup> Now few realists will recog-

<sup>1</sup> *World and the Individual*, First Series, Lecture III.

nize this as their intention; when it is said that, as a matter of fact, the object exists independently of its being known by me, it is scarcely meant that such independence *constitutes* its existence. Its existence is what it may happen to be; and its independence—its existential independence—of knowing is only one consequence of this. Nevertheless the entire force of Royce's reasoning depends upon thus loading the dice against independence by his preliminary definition. Once grant that reality is definable as itself nothing but a total absence of relations, and it is no hard matter to show the suicidal consequences. But if we suppose, as of course we must, that the existence of the object is something different from its relation of independence, there seems no reason why it might not have this relation, and other relations as well, without ceasing to be existentially other than an experience which knows it, *unless*, that is, the power of relations to be real outside a unitary mind be regarded as excluded; and while this may perhaps be the case, it cannot be taken for granted in an argument intended to demonstrate it. When realism talks of an object as "wholly other than ideas," it does not need to mean that ideal characters are to be excluded from the description of the object, but only that it embodies them in a form of existence which is not identical with their existence as thoughts of ours; all the dialectical difficulties arise, once more, from the determination, already familiar in the idealist, to absorb existence in logic.

7. Meanwhile positive difficulties are not lacking in the way of Royce's theory. For one thing, it does not seem clear how an absolute experience is going after all to save the deficiencies of human knowledge—the knowledge we are concerned primarily to explain. Royce insists that knowledge implies the recognition of a "beyond," while yet it has no meaning unless this transcendent fact is already in the possession of the self that knows it. But if the self that gives intelligibility to knowledge is not my empirical self, but one of which my em-

pirical experience confessedly falls short, what light does it throw upon the fact of *human* knowing? Royce tells us that an incomplete idea, a single judgment uncorrected by a wider one, knows only its incomplete content, about which, therefore, it cannot be in error; when John judges about Thomas, the judgment is not about the real Thomas, but about John's idea of Thomas, since the real Thomas never becomes any part of John's thought at all.<sup>1</sup> As a matter of fact this is not an accurate account; John's judgment is not about his idea of Thomas, but his idea—the logical content, not the psychical phenomenon—is precisely what he judges about the real Thomas. But if we do adopt Royce's analysis of the single judgment as a starting point, it seems fatal to his conclusion. For if the object of my judgment is in reality only my present content or idea, then *I* cannot mean a beyond. A larger mind which includes my idea along with the object may see that the latter is the fulfilment of the former; but if meaning is *defined* in terms of fulfilment, *I* in my finiteness could not have the sense of meaning at all.

Once grant, meanwhile, that *I* as a finite being may know objects beyond myself, not by including them in my own experience,—for then they would not be beyond me,—but by apprehending their logical nature or essence, and Royce's whole theory of error, with its momentous consequences, falls to the ground. For the *recognition* of an error it may well be that we need a wider judgment which shall show wherein the narrower judgment is at fault. But this only says that error is not *known* as such apart from wider *knowledge*; and there is no need that the conditions that lead to the discovery of error should constitute the nature of error as well. This wider judgment does not make it necessary that the realities *about* which we judge should enter into a single consciousness. It is enough that we should be able to compare their descriptive content; and the two descriptions might very well enter into a unity of

<sup>1</sup> *Religious Aspect of Philosophy*, pp. 405, 408 ff.

knowledge, without dragging after them the realities whose nature they profess to describe. Doubtless in *some* sense I must, as Royce urges, already "possess" an object in order that I may know what object I intend; but why is it not enough that the possession should be the ideal possession that knowledge involves—the presence of a recognized idea or content referred to reality at a point at which I come into practical contact with it as an active agent,—rather than the actual possession of a deeper self of which I am not in the least aware, and other than the finite self that does, for our human experience, the actual knowing? A logic which leads to the conclusion that every finite act of knowing is a knowledge of the entire universe, and our apparent ignorance only an inattention to details, calls for rigid scrutiny before it is accepted.<sup>1</sup>

And in particular it might be asked how, if the recognition of error presupposes actual as distinct from logical inclusiveness, I ever could detect an error held by another man, since Royce allows that for empirical experience the two selves do not coalesce. The case of our knowledge of other selves offers indeed rather special difficulties. The objectivity of nature means, for Royce, that it is socialized, communicable, categorized knowledge—what he calls a "world of description"; it is knowledge content which is held in common, and so it presupposes already an acquaintance with other selves. And unless parts of our experience come to us merely labelled "social," leaving us to find out by inference what this means, it would appear accordingly that this logically prior knowledge must bring us into actual contact with the inner life of purpose and appreciation in our fellows. But the mechanism for this, obscure at best, Royce makes doubly hard to understand by distinguishing immediate "appreciation" as lacking in those categorized qualities that constitute the world of "description"; and consequently he is found maintaining both that social experience must be presupposed before experience of the world of nature is intelligible,

<sup>1</sup> *World and the Individual*, Second Series, p. 57.



and yet that the object of social experience is an appreciation which is private and incommunicable. Royce imagines indeed the possibility of a sort of experience such that my neighbor's mind might be shared by me, and so laid immediately and telepathically open to my inspection.<sup>1</sup> But it is the Absolute, again, who alone enjoys this insight; and *our* possibilities of knowledge are consequently still left unexplained.

8. One further logical difficulty may be noted briefly. Royce insists repeatedly,—this is essential indeed for his treatment of ethics and religion,—that every last detail of our finite experience is present just as it is, though of course illuminated by a wider context, in God's life, in the same way in which sensational elements enter into the unity of experience we call ours. There is, however, one feature of finite experience where this becomes an apparent contradiction—the conscious sense of finiteness and limitation itself. A part can be a mere identical part of a whole, only so long as it does not recognize or feel itself *as* such a part, this sense of limitation cannot also be present unchanged in a whole for which the limitation has ceased to exist. The analogy breaks down because the elements in experience for us do not have this realization of their own separateness, or the peculiar emotional attitudes that go along with it. To appeal to our ability, for example, to appreciate the force of an argument while yet we see its limitations, is not to the point; what we need to suppose is, that one can at the same moment *believe* something to be a truth which nevertheless is seen to be in error. And since I do believe many things that are erroneous, these experiences *just as they are for me* seem excluded from the life of an omniscient God. One thing that helps Royce to overlook this difficulty of getting the finite bodily inside the Absolute, is the rather surprising absence, in his analysis, of any adequate recognition of “feeling” in experience, as distinct from thought and will; for it is the peculiar felt character of our existence that occasions most of the difficulty, and

<sup>1</sup> *Spirit of Modern Philosophy*, pp 395 f.

this character naturally is lost when we translate reality into terms of thought or knowledge. And the same deficiency leaves Royce's whole doctrine of the individual moving after all in the region of abstractions. If individuation is due simply to an act of voluntary attention to one system of ideas, at best all that we have done is to give a preferential position in the mind to what are still *ideas*, or logical facts. The notion of purpose seems indeed at first sight to bring us closer to the actual world. But the more we insist that thought and purposive action are identical, the more we are left with a purpose that consists only in the movement of ideas,—a "movement" still further withdrawn from the world in which purpose gets its significance for man, by the fact that this thought is at the same time eternally complete.

9. The criticism in the last paragraph touches another, and particularly vital point in Royce's philosophy. From the time of the publication of the *Conception of God*, a large share of his energy went toward counteracting the charge that his absolutism is fatal to human freedom and responsibility, and so cuts at the root of the ethical life. Royce exercises all his ingenuity to escape from this entanglement. But the same difficulty appears here as before, and in an aggravated form; the analogy with the sort of fact to which alone we can appeal, fails in an essential feature. The union of a multitude of individual wills in the divine will can only be approached in terms of the union of various impulses in the finite life. But the significant difference is, that the impulse does not as such recognize itself as having a particular aim to which others are external; an impulse is only an impulse *in* a self, and is not an *I*. Metaphorically it may be said sometimes to take the reins in its own hands, and aim at its own satisfaction. But for the strict point at issue this is nothing but a metaphor; and in any case such a thing can only happen as life is disorganized, which God's life presumably is not. In so far then as we are genuine selves, there is but a single will that operates in us,

though there are many interests; and accordingly the conception of an Absolute which includes a number of wills, and allows each a degree of freedom undetermined by other wills, or by the whole purpose to which they contribute, is strictly unthinkable, if we demand for our conceptions, as Royce rightly does, a ground in experience. It is significant that when Royce comes closest to grips with the metaphysical difficulties of his conception, he is forced after all to leave the world of concrete experience, and to resort to highly abstract and technical logical devices, where the infinite riches of the spiritual life pass into the infinite monotony of a "self-representative system."

§ 6. *The Idealistic School. McTaggart. Howison. Hocking. Laurie. Seth Pringle-Pattison*

1. Among the numerous adherents of the idealistic movement who call for briefer mention, the majority keep fairly closely to the lines marked out by Green and the Cairds. Here belong the names of William Wallace, the translator and interpreter of Hegel, William Leonard Courtney, Richard Lewis Nettleship, Robert Adamson (in his earlier writings), John Watson, D. G. Ritchie, Henry Jones, J. S. Mackenzie, J. H. Muirhead, R. B. Haldane, C. C. J. Webb, and others. A relatively more independent rendering of Hegel is to be found in J. D. Baillie. Baillie is acutely conscious of the dualisms that still persist even in the attempted correction of Kant by Green and his followers; and this incomplete idealism he traces to a failure to realize that perception, understanding, reason, morality, religion, are not independent functions or co-existing departments of mind, but different levels in the life of spirit in *each* of which a single principle is expressing itself; each has its own worth therefore, and none, not even the highest, can take the place of the rest. The business of philosophy is to explain them by showing their necessary place in the continuous

development of the one spiritual life, through their varying degrees of approximation to the whole. Meanwhile however the old difficulties about the relation of this seemingly psychological conception of "experience" to the individual human life, and of its "development" to the reality of time and to the unity of the Absolute, are still left very obscure. Somewhat outside the ranks of the professional philosophers are to be noted also May Sinclair, whose spirited and readable *Defense of Idealism* seems specially influenced by Green; and E. Belford Bax, whose insistence on an "alogical" element in reality tends to bring in by the back door motives not altogether consistent with his absolutism.

2. In America also, German philosophy, first seriously exploited by W. T. Harris and his organ the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, quickly displaced the older Scottish philosophy in the colleges. Here the influence of Royce is naturally apparent, while in recent years that of Bosanquet has been on the increase, very largely through the teaching activities of J. E. Creighton in the Sage School of Philosophy at Cornell University. Bosanquet's influence is conspicuous also in R. F. H. Hoernlé. Mary Whiton Calkins is perhaps the most prominent disciple of Royce. A free and relatively independent recent rendering of the idealistic tradition is George P. Adams' *Idealism and the Modern Age*, which attempts, as against the pragmatic and naturalistic reduction of knowledge to a biological control value, to vindicate the validity of the mind's attachment to objective "ideal structures," that call for recognition, knowledge, and love, rather than for mastery. Another and voluntaristic idealism of the Fichtean type is represented in Hugo Münsterberg, whose long residence in America, and a certain influence he exerted on American thinking, should perhaps give him a place in this account, though his intellectual affiliations are with Germany. Münsterberg divides sharply the over-causal and over-individual real world of appreciation and purpose, as a world of pure will-acts to be interpreted rather

than explained, from the phenomenal universe of science, where values are displaced by a mechanical nexus; and he endeavors by a brilliant *tour de force* to organize the world of absolute values—it appears that there are twenty-four of them—in terms of their necessary implication in the original will-act. It is this last that creates for us a permanent world out of a flux of passing experience, by the one fundamental deed of seeking identities, in which we find an absolute satisfaction that has no reference to pleasure, but rests only on the demand which the will makes for self-consistency.

✓ 3. The direct influence of Bradley has been less in evidence in America. Among English philosophers, A. E. Taylor and Harold Joachim are probably to be classed as his followers, though the former is hospitable to many other motives also, in particular to the voluntarism of Royce. Joachim's *Meaning of Truth* is noteworthy for its candid recognition of certain ultimate difficulties in the idealistic theory of "coherence" which have not been hidden from hostile critics, but which the idealists themselves have seldom fairly faced. The systematic knowledge which human minds possess is not, Joachim recognizes, even at its best, that living organism of Reason as a significant whole which the coherence theory of truth demands, but only, after all, a more or less logically complete description set over against a reality to be known—an ideal "what" divorced from existence; and therefore inevitably it after all suggests "correspondence," in some form, as the standard of its truth. And until it can be seen, as no philosopher now pretends to see, *how* reality requires as a necessary moment in its self-maintenance an arrest that issues in finite duplications of itself—modes which may even set themselves in that stubborn assertion of their own completeness which is the essence of error in its full discordance,—and *how* truth for us comes to take the form of a "wandering adjective" in correspondence with a reality to be known, we are involved in fundamental contradictions; our theory makes certain demands which both must

be, and cannot be, met. While however Joachim thus allows that if the coherence notion of truth be sound, no theory of coherence can itself be completely true, he does not consider the possibility that it ought to be abandoned.

4. There remains one fairly distinct group among recent idealists, distinguished by a common purpose to give back to the "self," in one fashion or another, a place in the system of reality from which Hegel's influence was always tending to dislodge it. In most cases this grows out of an ethical and religious interest; in John Ellis McTaggart, however, the motive is primarily logical and metaphysical. McTaggart is the most striking and incisive of the English commentators on Hegel, by virtue of a logical clear-headedness which demands a single precise meaning to every statement; and while it is not certain that Hegel himself is always most adequately represented when too much light is thrown upon his more cryptic utterances, the result is at any rate in the interests of straightforwardness, if not of spiritual edification.

McTaggart's interpretation of the dialectic abandons all attempt to identify the process of thought with that of reality, and looks upon it as the search by a finite mind for an adequate and consistent concept to cover the experienced facts,—a process which moves by correcting abstract and partial interpretations through a reference to the fuller reality that any bit of experience will reveal when its implicit structure is worked out. A certain lack of spiritual affinity here with the more orthodox forms of idealism is emphasized by the sympathetic treatment of hedonism, and the defence of individualism against an "organic" theory of society. McTaggart's central doctrine is that of the ultimateness of finite selves, and the consequent need for conceiving reality as a unity of system, and not of self-consciousness. The clue to the final nature of the Absolute is found in the social experience. Here, in the self as member of a society of selves, we have the recognition of an objective unity which itself is inwardly unified, a part which

contains the whole of which it is a part, since the unity is not only *in*, but *for*, the consciousness of each of the individuals. Accordingly we are forced to the conclusion that it is the eternal nature of Spirit to be differentiated into finite spirits, since an undifferentiated unity would not exist, and no other differentiations have vitality to stand against a perfect unity. In calling this conception atheistic, McTaggart means primarily to deny personality to existence as a whole; for what we know as personality, a consciousness of the non-ego is essential, and such a consciousness the Absolute cannot possess, since there is nothing outside it from which it can distinguish itself. But he equally rejects the supposition that in this society of selves there may exist one supreme personality; though so long as we distinguish this as finite from the whole of things,—and it is in this way that religion commonly conceives of God,—it stands on a different footing logically from an Absolute self.

The acceptance of the reality of the finite relieves McTaggart's system of certain of the difficulties that confront other types of absolutism. This however is counterbalanced by the intrusion of the further, and unsolved, problem of time and change. In general, the empirical plausibility of many of McTaggart's arguments implies the temporal self in the ordinary human sense. But the dialectic points rather to a "perfect and timeless" being, if the self is to be brought into connection with a consistent and harmonious whole; and the final puzzle as to how a system of eternal selves can give rise to the appearance of imperfect selves developing in time, is frankly given up, though a number of the difficulties in detail which philosophy has to meet are solved by using the distinction. It probably is intended as a partial justification of this logical complaisance that knowledge itself is not to be regarded as ultimate. In the eternal world, both cognition and volition tend to disappear from the content of reality, to be replaced by the emotion of love, as that form of human experience which most adequately embodies the demand for a perfect unity of self and

other-self, along with a perfect discrimination of the one from the other. And it may be granted that, as an experience, love does seem somewhat less repugnant to timelessness; though the need of appealing to a self whose nature consists in a boundless love for all other selves is hardly calculated to make more evident the identity of the timeless and perfect world with the one we actually know.

Meanwhile it might seem that there are objections to the claim that the demands of the Absolute Idea—which requires that the whole nature of the social unity should consist in the fact that it is for the individuals, and the whole nature of the individuals in the fact that the unity is for them<sup>1</sup>—are fulfilled cognitively in a community of selves. If we allow, as McTaggart seems to do,<sup>2</sup> that concretely the cognitive unity in the self which knows the world system, and the unity of the system which each self knows, are unities in different senses, can we really say that the whole nature of the social unity consists in the fact that it is for the individuals? The community does indeed depend upon an inner recognition of its unity by the individual members, for apart from its being recognized in consciousness, the social relation would be meaningless. But still some basis for the social system must have reality outside any possible consciousness or knowledge of it by finite spirits—else this knowledge of theirs would not be true knowledge; and if so, we lose the right to say that it has no nature except for the individuals. If the individuals in their proper character did not exist, there could be no relationship between them, as there would be no difference between sweet and sour were not the qualities themselves first presupposed; but the relationship is not *for* the individuals in the sense of being only a term within their consciousness, any more than the relation of difference is only inside the related terms. And this implies that, on the other hand, we cannot say that the individual's conscious

<sup>1</sup> *Studies in Hegelian Cosmology*, pp. 10 ff, 59 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 14, 25, 62.



recognition of his harmony with others itself *constitutes* the separate nature of each individual; things which in themselves are nothing cannot produce a world by coming into relation. The abstract logical content of the cognition of the social system may be—logically—identical with the system that is known; but the concrete self, or the concrete experience of knowing, is not reducible to mere logical content.

The only way of escaping the difficulty seems to be by giving up the notion of existence altogether, and keeping entirely to a logical analysis of the "social" as a *concept* simply, without reference to its existential implications. Then we could doubtless say, once more, that the relation of selves would not be that particular thing, a social unity, were it not for what goes on within the consciousness of each individual self. Similarly the individual might be said to have its *social meaning*, as distinct from its existence, only in terms of its relationships to other individuals. But unless social unity is to hang in the air, it must find a basis in realities; and these are bound to have a nature, and relationships, which the cognitive unity of any single self does not constitute, but has to recognize for what they are.

5. A philosophy which also interprets the Absolute as a community rather than as a single self, but which differs alike in its motivation, in the thoroughgoing transcendentalism of its method, and, in terms of content, in the enlargement of the spiritual community to include a perfect self, or God, is to be found, somewhat sketchily developed, in the American philosopher G. H. Howison. Howison is impressed by the danger which monism threatens to the integrity of ethical freedom and responsibility; and it is to save these that he sets out to develop, on a Kantian basis, an idealistic pluralism. Howison accepts the reduction of all existence to minds on the one hand, and, on the other, to the items and order of their experiences. These phenomenal experiences, as organized by the active forms of consciousness, are what we call the physical world of nature,

whose objectivity, therefore, is not substantive, but social—the reference to the universal society of minds as a standard. Meanwhile through the recognition by these selves of one another in their true or noumenal being, as ultimate and self-determining, their coexistence constitutes a moral order more fundamental than the physical,—an eternal City of God, wherein all the members have the equality belonging to their common aim of fulfilling one rational ideal. In this community, however, one larger Self stands out as the fulfilled type of every mind, the eternal perfection of the rational nature which is common to all,—a perfection made possible because in him alone there is lacking the material of sense that separates finite selves from the ideal, and renders necessary the experience of striving, out of which the phenomenal world, where evolution and causality rule, arises. And by this character which he possesses, God constitutes also the living bond of the union of finite selves, not as a creator,—no member of the eternal republic has any origin in time, and the category of efficient causation applies only to phenomena,—but as the Ideal which moves through its attractiveness. God rules not by the exercise of power but solely by light, not by authority but by reason, not by efficient but by final causation. And through this dependence of the causal on the moral world, the barrier left by Kant between the practical and the theoretical reason is broken down. Our ethical intuition is raised from the realm of feeling to that of intelligence; and the ethical first principle is shown to be not only itself an act of knowledge, but the principle of all knowledge, since it is through this ideal implied in a society of free beings that the world of perceptions is organized, and real experience separated from illusion.

6. A similar interest in the integrity of the self, though the speculative emphasis is differently placed, is also visible in a new turn recently given to the idealistic argument by W. E. Hocking. Notwithstanding a strong sympathy with mysticism, Hocking's interpretation of the religious experience has

a definitely realistic tone. The need is recognized explicitly for an outlying and creative reality, beyond the bounds of the self, as a requirement of worship, as well as, more incidentally, for free creative activity on the part of the finite person; indeed at times the notion of the Absolute seems to be no more than an assertion of the presence of absolute *validity* in knowledge,<sup>1</sup> and to leave us within the precincts of a dualistic theism. The central argument of the book, however, is plainly a variant of the idealistic tradition. It is to the effect that God is known by man directly in immediate sense experience. The argument involves two theses in particular,—that sense experience is a common ingredient in the lives of different selves, which literally coalesce in Nature, and that a necessary aspect of our nature experience is the concurrent recognition of Other Mind as also knowing the same content. And since this Other Mind cannot be that of my human fellows, whom I recognize as, equally with myself, dependent upon nature, which does not have to wait for their knowing in order to exist, we are forced to identify it with God as the universal Knower implicated in all objective knowledge. We thus know even our fellow beings only because we first know God, since the knowledge of God supplies the whole notion of “social” experience without whose prior possession our inferential recognition of human selves would be impossible.

The first point here has in certain ways a real advantage over the more usual doctrine of the idealists, for which “nature” is an ideal construction by means of which various selves, in possession of experience essentially private, are able to communicate with one another; for if there is an actual identity of sense perception, we have a bridge for passing from self to self which the mere logical sameness of an ideal content fails in any obvious way to supply. It is true this makes a very doubtful assumption when it supposes that the primary object of knowledge is the sense experience itself; this is the original

<sup>1</sup> *Meaning of God in Human Experience*, pp. 191, 204.

vice of subjectivism, and once in its toils, no way has ever yet been found that will quite enable us to escape. It is the other part of the argument, however, that calls for special attention. The idea of an Other Mind, it is urged, must be at the same time an experience of Other Mind, and carry existence with it, for the reason that if it were a *mere* idea, there would be no standard by reference to which it could be thus recognized; even the *idea* of a social experience would not be possible, were such an experience not at the same time actual.<sup>1</sup>

Now it is possible to see how this might be a valid argument, *provided* we first accept the reduction of the concept of "objectivity" to social agreement. We cannot really doubt the objectivity of knowledge; and if, accordingly, the objective is definable in social terms, if it *means* only that which other minds agree with us in knowing, then the recognition of the social, to be possible in idea even, must apparently be a primitive datum of experience, since, as all philosophy goes to show, we cannot achieve the objective by starting from pure subjectivity. We could, then, have no world at all apart from the sense of not being alone in knowing this world, and God, as the perpetual "sustainer of universality" in our judgments, must be somehow present in experience from the beginning.<sup>2</sup> This however is only a dialectical triumph unless it can presuppose an acceptance of the original definition; and the necessity for this has already been seen to be debatable. If we allow it possible that the object of perception may exist independently of my knowing it, rather than as an element of experienced content, there is no reason why I might not start with a solitary recognition of this object as my nature experience, or why the "sense of reality" might not arise from an active commerce with a physical environment, rather than from an intellectual perception of "shared" ideas. It may very well be that I carry over to the natural agent from the start some of the characteristics that later are distinguished as belonging

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 274 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 281, 288

to a self; but this is very different from viewing it as *known by* a self, and only thus as getting objectified at all.

In a sense it may still be admitted that we must first have something that can be called a social experience before we can reproduce it in idea; but we cannot assume by definition that a social experience is bound to include the actual experienced presence of a further self. We have to look to the facts to see what it actually does mean; and what the facts *seem* to suggest is, simply, the cognitive acceptance of a socius *not* directly experienced, but only implied in ideal terms. And this calls attention to a point of difficulty in Hocking's position; even supposing his argument for a fellow-Knower to be allowed, the justification nevertheless is doubtful for talking of an "experience" of this Other Mind. Granting the existence of a communistic society which has a common property in sense experiences, still the essential Self, the living center, that which knows, is something other than its possessions, and exercises an activity which at best enters into my life only in the shape of its results. And there seems no more possibility therefore of my "experiencing" in an immediate way another self in the case of God,—though I might have experiences that lead to a direct recognition or idea of him without the use of conscious inference,—than in the case of the human selves where it is explicitly denied, unless indeed the fact be that I myself create both myself and nature through a mystical identification with the creative thought of God. And then that integrity of the self which Hocking wishes to maintain would disappear.

7. What Hocking calls a Social Realism, with an absolutistic background, has two further representatives of importance, whose philosophical results are rather closely identified. Technically there might be some objection to dealing with the first of these in connection with the German influence. In epistemology, Simon S. Laurie seems at first sight to belong to the tradition of Scottish dualism, and his earliest book, *Metaphysica Nova et Vetusta*, is expressly a defence of "natural

realism." Even in the lower levels of experience,—in sensation, and in that synoptic grouping of sense impressions which he distinguishes by the name of Attuition,—Laurie finds an implicit dualism of feeling and felt Other; there is a dim awareness of the presence of actual Being, different from any possible logical predicate. The objective categories already implicitly present in attuited objects are not therefore, as in Kant, to be regarded as furnished by the subject; they are found in, not imposed on, phenomena. There is no good ground for doubting that we are here brought into contact with the real structure of things; why should we not accept the testimony of experience, rather than put it on the defensive? The burden of proof lies with him who would question this; we are entitled to start with the assumption of a harmony between the conscious and the non-conscious, since it is absurd to suppose that the scheme of creation turns out to be a fiasco just when it reaches its highest stage in finite reason.

These categories begin to be explicit in Perception, which is the elementary form of Reason. The essence of Reason is active Will, of which the categories are the "form." While in sensation the Object seizes the Subject as it were, and consciousness is relatively passive, in Reason the Subject itself goes out and seizes the sensed Object. And in this way it effects *knowledge* in the distinctive sense, through an act of affirmation, or judgment of identity, which arrests the flux of phenomena through the conscious discrimination of the original felt datum as *not* other things but just itself, and so turns it into a more or less permanent object of consciousness. At the same time it makes explicit the Subject also, which before was likewise only felt, and relates the object to the unity of the conscious self. Rational Judgment is the explicit enunciation of this original act which constitutes Perception, and of the categories which it involves. It is the distinctive work of Reason, no longer simply accepting the collocations and sequences of the animal experience, to pass, through analysis,

from a world, real indeed but not rationally coherent, to the Actual, as the synthesis of a systematic unity in knowledge.

So far epistemology. When however Laurie turns to metaphysics, it appears that this dualism is only relative, and is subordinated to a Pluralistic Monism, in which once more the attempt is made to accomodate the reality of the finite to the all-comprehensive unity of an Absolute Life. For it is the explanation of this power of Reason to grasp reality, that it is itself a pulse of the Infinite Reason in which we live and move and have our being. God lives in the act of revealing himself in and to finite selves, Nature forming the medium of this revelation; he is the One Being in which and out of which all differences arise, including even the supreme opposition of Subject and Object. True knowledge of the world is possible because man is really one with Nature; he is Nature becoming conscious in and through its highest product. He finds the reason-process in the universe because he is himself a conscious reason-process, and in organic continuity with the whole; raised to self-identity and self-affirmation, he is able to read and interpret the total record through the "form" of this spiritual movement which is a gift of the divine Reason in him. At the same time we are not to forget that the pluralism is also real. The act of reason by which we realize the divine purpose through coming to know God, is in each man a unique center of energy; man is not a mere passive instrument, and the Absolute can be realized in the whole only by being realized in each. Laurie struggles heroically with this conception of a "dependent independence," but to very little purpose; for we are paying ourselves with words when we profess to explain the puzzling facts of finiteness by an appeal to the "eternal fact of Negation as necessary moment in Absolute Being," or the nature of the individual as the "thinking of God caught in the Negation."<sup>1</sup>

8. It is a very similar solution that we find, in closer con-

<sup>1</sup>*Synthetica*, Vol. II, pp 65, 68.

nection with the main movement of Idealism, and expressed with a lucidity in striking contrast with Laurie's highly technical and difficult phraseology, in the maturer philosophy of Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison. Some of Pringle-Pattison's earlier writings might easily give the impression of a break with the traditional tenets of the idealistic school. His *Hegelianism and Personality*, in particular, contains one of the most effective of the criticisms of Hegel's logical monism, with its absorption of finite selves in the one comprehensive Self; and elsewhere the dualistic claims involved in human knowing are clearly recognized, in opposition to the evasions of the orthodox idealistic epistemology. It becomes evident however in his latest volume, *The Idea of God*, that this is to be taken as a correction of absolutism, rather than its repudiation. The argument of the book proceeds from the need of utilizing the life of ideal values to interpret reality, instead of reducing reality to terms of the lower and mechanical categories; but it is critical of the disposition to interpret such an argument by reference to the claims of particular emotional needs of man's nature. This last is apt to take the shape of a mistaken opposition between the spiritual life and science, and of a dangerous disparagement of the scientific categories; the life of spirit ought rather to be regarded as a higher level of that same reality which first meets us in nature. So again on the side of man's relation to a higher Being. It is the validity of objective values, not the rights of special instincts, that is decisive here; for a true philosophy, the center of gravity is not in the claims of the individual, but in God as revealing himself to man, and admitting him to participation in a universal and over-individual process.

Man, then, is an organic part of the continuity of nature, which only for this reason can he truly know; and the whole evolutionary process is the immanent life of an Absolute which uses nature as a means of self-revelation to finite beings, and



whose existence is alike revealed in, and constituted by, the facts of human striving through which strength of moral fibre is attained. It is revealed, that is, as the truth at this particular level, into which preceding stages have been taken up; we cannot stop with humanity however as our highest concept, since human life clearly finds its completion in a source that transcends it. From this eternal source all that is real derives its being. We are neither to suppose then, with naturalism, that higher forms of reality can be explained away in terms of the lower, nor, with certain more recent pluralistic philosophies, that literal novelties appear in the course of development, which in no sense were real before. In the continuity of the universal process new differences emerge which disclose the inadequacy of the categories of a previous level for interpreting the world; but they are progressive revelations, not additions. The notion of sheer accretions to the sum of reality, successive spurts of something out of nothing, is unthinkable. Meanwhile we are not to regard God as realized somehow independently of his developing purpose in the world, whether at the end of the time process, or beyond it altogether. God *is* the very process itself, present in the world as its Redeemer in an eternal act of self-realization through the giving of himself to others,—an act in which time is transcended, and the future is equally implicated with the past and present.

No English defender of absolutism has shown a more balanced feeling than Pringle-Pattison for the diverse elements that enter into the philosophical problem; and if the result is still not altogether convincing, it is possible this may be bound up in the very nature of an effort to construct by thought an object of speculative knowledge which goes beyond any possibility of imaginative realization. For it has in the end to be admitted that for the *how* of God's connection alike with the physical world and with the finite selves of whom he is the sustaining life, for the relation of eternity to time and

progress, for all the problems that are most ultimate, in fact, we have nothing in experience to give us any real clue.<sup>1</sup> Of the very nature of the Absolute, from the standpoint of its own self-knowledge, we can say nothing, not even that it is personal; in Laurie's phrase, all specific predicates are *in* reality, not *of* it. And the claim that we have met the charge of scepticism and phenomenalism by insisting that our truth is true *for us*, as the highest which we possess, and is to be held as true *until* it is superseded, is surely an evasion. None but the most reckless sceptic has ever denied that practically we ought to stick to the most satisfying knowledge we can get. What phenomenalism asserts is, that there exists an outlook upon reality, and this the only ultimately real one, which we not only cannot attain, but which we are certain is different from our own; and this is where the present theory leaves us also. Nor is it clear that so transcendent a reality will meet the needs of religion any more than those of understanding. There are difficulties in plenty, doubtless, in the alternative which Pringle-Pattison rejects; the notion of God as a Self in a community of selves, and so as less than the whole sum of existing things, raises questions that are hard to meet. But the difficulties are at least in terms of logic, and not of valuation. Unless our whole social experience be a false guide, a God who existed as a socius would in so far show an actual increment of ethical, if not of metaphysical worth; to say nothing of the fact that he would be in essence knowable, and not a mere condition or fount of knowledge.

No more satisfactory is the theory of Nature, conceived as a form of reality striving toward self-consciousness, and attaining in man an organ through which it beholds and enjoys itself.<sup>2</sup> If this means that God himself first comes to consciousness in man, its value for religion is dubious; and if it means that man is nothing but the physical organism, and,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *The Idea of God*, pp. 202, 285, 293, 359, 364, 378, 390-1.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 111, 115, 127.

through the organism, the physical universe, blossoming into a self-awareness, it seems more poetic than intelligible. The theory of the soul as the entelechy of the body is not a new one; but no one has ever taken a step toward carrying through its application to the plain differences of psychical and physical content in the concrete. It conveys a definite meaning to say that the world without man would not be complete, in that man must be added to the sum of things—other than himself—before the possibilities of existence are exhausted; or that the being of things passes into consciousness, meaning that their ideal *essence* is taken up into human knowledge; or that God elicits out of the common fund of externality a new world of appreciation and spiritual communion, if this means that the natural world is the theatre of human action, in which men find ideally—not, again, by actual transmutation of existence—some of the material of social intercourse; or that the world seems to take on added richness as we develop faculties to apprehend it, in the sense that it reveals new relationships to us, and new possibilities of use. But none of these things lend any authority to such a claim as this, that music, for example, is there in the cosmic system known to me, as well as here in me, though it has to await me in order to realize its own truth in the system.<sup>1</sup> The *possibility* of music must of course be present; and if all possibilities are eternally realized, so somehow music must be actually present too. And were matter to be taken, not as a stage in God's self-realization, but as an imperfect rendering of God's present life due to our limitations of knowledge, we might have the right to claim that our growth in human appreciations is a revelation, rather than a subjective addition. But then it would not be objects themselves that develop into fuller truth in us, but human consciousness that arrives at a fuller knowledge of God,—thereby making no doubt its social contribution to the wealth of being; and matter becomes only a *medium* for this revelation. And to

<sup>1</sup> Laurie, *Synthetica*, Vol. I, p. 118.

identify, instead, the actual life of God with the potentialities of nature as itself evolving into man, at least is only possible through a faith in the unreality of Time which confounds all our human attempts at clear analysis, and leaves "matter" quite out of relation to our everyday conceptions of it.

## CHAPTER VI

### PERSONAL IDEALISM, PANPSYCHISM AND REALISM

#### § 1. *Personality and Religion. Personal Idealism*

1. In comparison with the self-confidence and relative solidarity of the absolute idealists, and their highly articulated and comprehensive program, other tendencies in the latter part of the nineteenth century run the risk of appearing chaotic and lacking in prestige. It was not until the appearance of two rival philosophies,—first pragmatism, and later neo-realism,—showing something of the same unity of logical technique that lends itself to enthusiastic discipleship and the founding of a school, and marked by an originality of standpoint which could not be waved aside as mere outgrown traditionalism, that the vogue of absolutism was seriously imperilled. Nevertheless there was a very considerable amount of contemporaneous thinking going on to which the idealists, in their critical preoccupation with the empiricism of Locke and Hume, and their conviction that Germany had at last hit upon the one true method in philosophy, were inclined to do something less than justice. Most of this also was influenced in some measure by Kant. But in the main it had more realistic sources, in part the Scottish philosophy of Common Sense, in part the older English tradition modified by recent advances of science, and partly also foreign-grown products such as, in particular, the idealistic realism of Lotze.

The confused cross-currents that are present here will necessarily lead to some degree of arbitrariness in any attempt at a

brief survey; but certain rough generalizations can be made. The representatives of the various tendencies agree in rejecting the epistemology of absolutism, and for the most part are realists in knowledge; they accept some sort of dualism between thought and things, such that the passage from one to the other still constitutes for them a problem. In their ontology they differ more widely. On the one hand, especially where the scientific interest is pronounced, there appears some more or less thoroughgoing form of physical realism, which attempts to find a more solid foundation for scientific knowledge than the sensationalism of the earlier empiricists supplies. Much more characteristic of the period, however, is an idealistic or quasi-idealistic realism having its source in religious and ethical, rather than in naturalistic motives. Here, instead of connecting ideal values with an Absolute, there is a general disposition to make the finite person the center of philosophy, using this as a clue for interpreting, more commonly in a theistic sense, the fundamental nature of things.

This interest in the self shows three closely related aspects, which enter into what is supposed to be its speculative value. First, there is the traditional interest of theism, which wishes to use human personality as a clue, and read it into the ultimate nature of existence. Tied up with religion also, though based as well on simpler human demands, is the desire to find the universe a permanent abiding-place for man, and not a mere stage on which he plays a transient earthly rôle. Finally, and most important philosophically, there is the determination to conceive reality in such a way that the ideal values, moral and otherwise, which attach to human life and human nature, may be felt to be solidly grounded, and not the precarious by-products of an impersonal evolution. All of these motives converge in one polemical purpose—to overthrow that system of scientific naturalism by which the claims of religion, immortality, and conscience, have appeared to so many modern thinkers to be jeopardized.

2. The emotional force back of such an endeavor gets a highly characteristic expression in the poetry of Alfred Tennyson. It has been one clear tendency of scientific thought to depreciate the importance of man and his desires in the universe. We are but so many transient products of a great cosmic process, utterly inconsequential, except to ourselves, in the vast stretch of law-abiding phenomena. *We* work for ends; we have various preferences for this thing over that, to which we give such names as right, justice, beauty; we are concerned with our own destinies, and with interests, religious interests for example, with which these seem to us bound up. But science does not speak of ends at all. It substitutes impersonal laws for the notion of God and religion, the species for the individual, scientific understanding for poetry and emotional aspiration. As we trace life back further and further into the past, all those qualities that we call human and moral gradually disappear, until we can scarcely avoid putting to ourselves the question, Have the ideals that give worth to human experience, rooted as they are in bestiality and carnage, any ultimate validity at all, or are they not mere delusions when looked at in their larger context?

To all that this tendency implies, Tennyson found his own convictions profoundly opposed. For him, the special locus of the meaning and significance of experience is just the fact of personal human relationships, which bind man with his fellow man, and show themselves on the side of feeling in sympathy and human love. And in personality he finds not only the presupposition necessary for the maintenance of moral values, but the one irreducible core of reality and fact which remains to us philosophically amid the uncertainties and illusions of experience. "You may tell me that my hand and my foot are only imaginary symbols of my existence—I could believe you; but you never, never can convince me that the *I* is not an eternal Reality, and that the Spiritual is not the true and real part of me." And in the certainty of this his own

spiritual reality, Tennyson discovers a way of escape from the unsatisfactoriness incident to a naturalistic universe. Briefly, it is the solution of faith,—a faith resting upon a lively conviction that certain things are so important that they give us a right to hold to them whatever the intellectual temptation to set them aside. A true philosophy bids us look not to science and what is, but to the ideals that have their root in blind gropings after what is higher and better than anything yet realized in the world. The interpretation of life lies in this constant warfare between the baseness in our blood which is the heritage of an animal past, and the adumbrations of a final victory when our true nature shall have come into its own. Such a goal is the object of faith and not of knowledge, because it has not yet appeared fully in the realm of fact. But it is the superiority of man over the brute that he can thus act by faith; though facts seem to bear him down, he can “faintly trust the larger hope,” and so be put on his way to its realization. All morality and religion consist in not allowing ourselves to be overborne by the pressure of the apparent nature of things, to be so enchained to so-called facts that we are blind to their future promise. And guided by this inner light, the world which to science is only the outcome of mechanical law becomes the imperfect expression of a divine purpose; and man, instead of a chance product of impersonal forces, shows himself the inheritor of an eternal destiny, and the possessor of an absolute value in the scheme of things.

For the rest, if we ask for a more positive account of this reality, we can expect no clear answer; indeed we know it more truly when we do not try to subject it to our finite measurement. We may be confident that somehow there is a good meaning to life which will secure the interest that man calls spiritual, that through the ages one increasing purpose runs with which man progressively can coöperate and so realize his own ends. But *what* God is we cannot hope to set down in human words. Our truest knowledge comes in those



moments of mystical insight when we cease trying to argue and prove directly, and pass, by an intimate experience of feeling, from doubt to certitude. Meanwhile this fundamental ground of reality, though it is above our human comprehension, we are not to forget that we can rise to only by starting from ourselves; and we are not to let go our hold therefore on this positive content, as at least truer than blank ignorance. Nor may God override the human personalities from which originate all our conceptions of value. Tennyson insists always upon the intimacy of God's relation to man. But while he would remove Nature as a barrier, and interpret it as the immediate symbol or expression of an immanent divine Power, man still retains his integrity:

Dark is the world to thee: thyself art the reason why;  
For is He not *all but thou*, that hast power to feel "I am I?"

3. In a more logically exacting form, the "faith philosophy" of Tennyson comes to play an increasingly important part in the development of recent English philosophy outside the range of naturalism and of absolutism. One not inconsiderable force in this direction is to be found in the philosophical teaching of Alexander Campbell Fraser, Hamilton's successor in the chair of philosophy at Edinburgh. At the outset an adherent of the Scottish school, the realistic motive is in Fraser appreciably modified by Berkeley's influence—the later Berkeley more particularly. While his doctrine is not wholly unambiguous, on the whole he seems disposed to regard the natural world as constructed out of sense perception by the indwelling presence of the divine Reason; in any case, it is not to be taken as self-contained and independent, but as a manifestation of God's active nature, whose essence lies in its capacity to reveal God to man. It is perhaps on principle that Fraser refuses to define himself very explicitly here, since a certain distrust of the powers of the metaphysical intellect is the most distinctive feature of his philosophical point of view.

Not only as against a naturalistic absorption in phenomena, but in opposition to an arrogant claim to complete speculative knowledge, he stands for the "venture of faith," though of a faith critically verified by reflection. While we must recognize that there is perfect Reason in the world corresponding to man's cognitive efforts,—since otherwise we could not find, as within limits we do find, the world interpretable,—yet at best our finite reason is only very tentative and groping. It is guided not by full insight, but by the emotional assurance of a fundamental Goodness in the universe which will not put us to moral confusion; indeed such moral trustworthiness is all that gives us any right to retain our confidence that even the scientific order which we trace among phenomena will not fail us.

4. The same mode of vindicating human interests that rest on faith or feeling, pressed still further in the direction of a scepticism of the logical instrument, is adopted with much dialectical skill and literary effectiveness by Arthur J. Balfour. Balfour directs his efforts mainly against naturalism, though more incidentally he pays his respects also to Idealism and its claims to supply the basis for a logically stable and demonstrative metaphysics. The indictment of naturalism is twofold. In the first place, a naturalistic origin for our æsthetic and moral and religious convictions is of a sort to leave them without any reasonable foundation. The value of our most valuable beliefs is lost if they have no more congruous source than the blind transformations of physical energy. They become mere chance episodes in the welter of meaningless events; and the recognition of this is certain in the end to sap their vitality. In point of fact, the principle of natural selection has so far not been successful in making out its case as a matter of natural history even, since it is just in the instances where we find great intrinsic, as opposed to instrumental worth,—the sense of beauty, for example,—that the direct effect of selection is to all appearance negligible.

But now also—and this is logically fatal as well—the same conclusion applies even to “truth.” No philosophy can be truly consistent without some correspondence between the accepted value of results and the accepted theory of causes; and a creed therefore contradicts itself which sets, as naturalism does, a high value on true beliefs, and at the same time holds a theory as to the ultimate origin of beliefs which suggests their falsity. For if our faculties of belief are the chance outcome of natural selection due to the insistent needs of physical life, there is not the least probability that an instrument will in this way have been created fitted for exploring the secrets of the universe, and for supplying a guarantee to those larger considerations, indifferent to survival needs, on which a total world view—and this includes the world view of the phenomenalist—depends. Actually, our beliefs rest in large degree, not on scientific proof, but on authority—by which is meant not definite authorities assigned as a reason for believing, but the alogical convictions which we accepted in the first place, and continue to hold, without attempting to give reasons for them at all; the whole human race, including the philosopher, lives by faith, if by this we mean conviction apart from and in excess of evidence. To understand belief we have to take account not merely of premises and their conclusions, but of needs and their satisfactions; and there is no reason whatever for limiting this to purely material needs. The true function of reason is the incidental one of correcting here and there our opinions in detail, while still always presupposing such an alogical background. It perhaps is worth noting here that when he calls belief “non-rational,” Balfour is presupposing one particular ideal of reason only; he does not consider the possibility that “rationality” might itself be defined in terms of the mutual support which beliefs render one another, without demanding for them individually any demonstrable finality. As to more positive philosophical conclusions, Balfour argues that, while the evidence can never be compulsory, an intelligent

guidance of the world-process, such as theism presupposes, makes at any rate more understandable the claim alike of truth, and of feeling, to connect us with reality; it helps provide an intelligible explanation of the good fortune which has made natural causes which are not reasons, issue in what is by hypothesis a rational system.

5. It would be useless to attempt to follow out with anything like completeness the rôle of faith in contemporary philosophy, since it is present, with varying degrees of emphasis, wherever "voluntarism" has attempted to supplant "intellectualism." Comparable in point of literary skill with Balfour's work, is W. H. Mallock's plausibly written volume *Is Life Worth Living?* which attacks naturalism from a standpoint of faith in ecclesiastical authority, and tries to show that apart from supernaturalism, ethical as well as religious convictions lose their support, and are destined to extinction. Worth noting for a degree of novelty in the method of approach, is a recent book also by W. R. Sorley. Here the argument starts from the need of overcoming the empirical discord between nature and morality, the reign of scientific law and the objectivity of values; and it holds that the only way to interpret the world of nature successfully as a consistent part of the same rational universe with the realm of values, is to regard it as an instrument for the discovery and production of values by finite minds. The truest account of reality is, accordingly, in terms of a purposive system in which nature is the medium of moralization, and human selves are free agents who work out the unity of the universal purpose in achieving their own perfection. Another book, which calls attention to the wide philosophic range of a humanistic appeal to interests and values for the establishing of truth, is a coöperative volume called *Personal Idealism*, emanating from a group of Oxford men. Here we find ranged together the voluntaristic psychology of G. F. Stout, the Berkeleian theism of Hastings Rashdall, the pragmatism of F. C. S. Schiller and Henry Sturt,

and the spiritualistic idealism of Boyce Gibson, the translator and popularizer of Eucken.

6. Besides furnishing, from the resources of its emotional life, the impulse to belief, and the value content of experience, the self may also be utilized to supply the categories in terms of which to think intellectually the nature of the world; and such an attempt to interpret the forms of thought employed by the older theistic argument, as themselves understandable only when we take them as functions within the unity of a personal life,—an attempt largely influenced by Kant,—is characteristic of the religious philosophy of recent years. Absolutism of course may, and does, adopt a similar program, very explicitly in the case of Green; but the logic of absolutism has nevertheless been pretty clearly in the direction of a more impersonal construction, and the substitution of Mind, or Spirit, or Experience, for the “self” concept. An anticipation of this “personalism” is to be found in a volume, not as well known as its ability deserves, by John Grote, a brother of the historian, who held the chair of moral philosophy at Cambridge from 1855 to 1866. Grote’s book, which is suggestive rather than systematic, is primarily a criticism of phenomenalism, in opposition to which he would justify our right to investigate the *nature* of things,—what they are, as against merely what they do. The background for the criticism is an epistemology which is influenced by Kant, but which repudiates Kant’s agnosticism. The defect of scientific phenomenalism lies in its disposition to take as it stands the world that has already been constructed in knowledge, and to overlook the fact that there can be no reality, for us at least, except as it is interpreted in connection with its *knowability*. And if known, it must in so far be “anthropomorphic.” Knowledge presupposes the activity of the mind,—a mind that is actual, and neither a mere phenomenon, nor yet a formal abstraction,—in projecting itself into the confusion of sense data, and imposing its categories on nature. It does this not in any final and *a priori* way, but

experimentally, through a self-correcting process, which, however, leaves us a rational ground for the confidence that our interpretative categories are really present in reality itself; we feel the cognitive act, that is, not as a creation, but as a *recognition*—the meeting with a Mind already there. Knowledge accordingly is the attributing, to what we are conscious of as different from ourselves, of that which is *in* ourselves; thus the fundamental notion of unity, for example, implied in the concept of a “thing,” is not itself phenomenal, but is the projection of ourselves, and of the unity of end that characterizes a self, into the mass of phenomenal data. In the same way Grote criticizes the positivistic conception of the “ought,” and of “history” as the source of our ideals; for the ideal, we must look again to man’s inner nature and demands.

7. The emphasis on the self as a source of the categories for rendering reality intelligible, as well as supplying inner motives for belief, is present, as has been said, in most of the recent philosophy of theism. Such a theistic idealism, which aims in one way or another to get rid of the independent and alien rôle of matter, and reduce all reality to a “commerce of minds,” is most fully elaborated in the systematic writings of the American philosophers G. T. Ladd and B. P. Bowne. Among other recent theists are A. T. Ormond, James Lindsay, and George Galloway. A theistic argument starting this time from a Berkeleian basis,—that of Hastings Rashdall,—is deserving of notice for its explicit recognition of what is of course a corollary of any philosophy of this type—the existential limitation or finiteness of God,—and for its endeavor to qualify such a concept properly, and defend it against the religious claims of Absolutism. In a more extreme form this doctrine of a finite God had previously been urged in an early work of the pragmatist F. C. S. Schiller; and very recently, it has attracted wide attention through its adoption by the novelist H. G. Wells. Wells’ defence of the conception, as alone having true religious value, is much in the spirit of J. S. Mill;

it finds the needs of religion satisfied by a God who is frankly the militant leader of men in a campaign against evil and suffering, and who has no creative responsibility for the back-lying world of Veiled Being, in which evil is so real and so burdensome a fact.

## § 2. *Panpsychism*

1. Alongside theistic idealism and personalism with its—for the most part—religious interest, and at times combining with this, is another idealistic tendency of considerable importance in recent philosophy, whose motive is more distinctly speculative. "Panpsychism" is a theory which has its source in the first instance in an attempt to account for the relationship of mind and body, without presupposing two separate and interacting entities. As such it has found wide acceptance, not only for the reason that a causal relation between alien forms of reality has seemed difficult to understand, but, more especially, because interaction appears to break in upon the continuity of physical law. Among the scientists, accordingly, some theory of "parallelism" as a solution of the mind-body problem began early to be adopted as the most plausible working hypothesis. Frequently this professed to be nothing more than a methodological assumption, further metaphysical questions being left unconsidered. But where the ultimate rationale of the situation was made an object of investigation at all, it was found almost inevitably to lead beyond the mere empirical connection of consciousness with the particular facts of nervous structure, to the supposition\* of a more far-reaching correspondence. Such a speculative theory might thereupon take one of two general forms. For the first, mind and matter are held to be "aspects" of a single reality, a basis of unity being postulated in a more ultimate substance whose essence is beyond our knowledge. This is a theory already met with more than once among the philosophers of naturalism; a further instance, with

a religious bias, is a volume by J. A. Picton called the *Mystery of Matter*, in which the conception of an ultimate reality with diverse manifestations receives a quasi-spiritualistic interpretation to which the writer gives the name of Christian Pantheism. The second form is the one adopted by Clifford in his mind-stuff theory, and more vaguely anticipated by Alfred Barratt; this looks upon the psychical as itself the sole reality, while matter now becomes the appearance that mind presents to an outside observer.

2. Among psychologists, in particular, this last conception has found a rather wide acceptance. Of its more romantic possibilities, though in this case from a biological rather than a psychological starting point, Samuel Butler furnishes an example. Butler's doctrine originates as an attempt to supplant Darwin's theory of natural selection by the notion of an inner teleology; and it rests upon two main theses—the literal identity of offspring with parent, and the reduction of instinct and habit to a persisting memory, becoming unconscious in proportion as it gains efficiency, of actions performed by the organism in the person of its forefathers. In this way each new individual is enabled to manufacture the organs which it needs, essentially as it manufactures mechanical tools,—which last are, indeed, nothing but extensions of the human organs beyond the confines of the body. Butler goes on to draw the conclusion that what we know as an individual is, on the one hand, composed of smaller cell-minds, while also in the other direction it is a particle in a wider life-process which animates the world, this world-God in turn entering into a still more inclusive, though to us an unknown, Deity. At first Butler had limited conscious memory to the organic world; but in his later books the limitation is withdrawn, and every atom of matter without exception is endowed with life and memory.

3. The evident possibilities which panpsychism holds out for a religious philosophy, suggested in Butler's metaphysics, have already appeared in connection with absolute idealism,



particularly in the treatment which it receives from Royce. An interesting variant of this religious interpretation is to be found in the writings of James Hinton, which lie on the border line between philosophy and literature. Hinton accepts, on a certain level, the right of phenomenism to protest against the intrusion of doubtfully scientific forces and concepts; the remedy is not to dispute the claims of a mechanistic science in its own sphere, but to transform this world of science as a whole by a spiritual reinterpretation. The peculiarity of Hinton's doctrine lies in the particular explanation given for the fact that reality thus reveals itself to us under the aspect of phenomena. Phenomenal matter is dead, inert; it shows nothing of that spontaneous activity which we are bound to conceive as belonging to true Being. But instead of looking for the source of this inertness in nature itself, we should reverse the process; if reality in its true being cannot be inert, then the inertness which characterizes it to man's consciousness must be due to his own state and condition. We view the world as physical, only because of a defect in ourselves which modifies our perception; some of the constituents of reality which make it real have dropped out in our apprehension of it. And these constituents are reinstated when we turn from the intellect to the organs of moral and spiritual knowledge—to conscience and emotion; to rise to true Being, to the Absolute, to God the perfect unity of Life and Love, we have only to correct the subjective fault to which the phenomenal is due. Man has thus made matter by his sin, his selfishness. We see matter because only love can see love; wherever there is not-love, there is matter. So even of the self as an individual. Persons are states of fallen humanity; it is only as material that men are many and separate, and redemption means the overcoming of the separation of man from his fellow man and God by the path of love and self-sacrifice.

4. Another and more technical philosopher, in whom a panpsychist metaphysics is allied, however, with a scientific

rather than a religious interest, is Carveth Read. For Read also we come in direct contact with the ultimately real only in immediate consciousness; that portion of empirical reality which extends beyond consciousness—the external world which includes our own bodies—is not thus ultimate, but represents reality in the form of a system of phenomena which consciousness constructs. Behind such appearances, however, we are forced for various reasons to believe that a transcendent reality exists, more particularly because it is needed to account for changes in phenomena in the absence of any known percipient, and for our conviction that a single external world is common to different men. This wider reality we may reasonably conjecture is in its nature like the piece of it which we directly know; for if consciousness were not originally a factor in all existence, its beginnings would, on the principle of continuity, be impossible to account for. The entire nature of existence cannot indeed be fully expressed by consciousness; there is a transcendent being which *is* conscious, or whose activity consciousness represents. But some knowledge of this existence we possess, partly from the laws of phenomena which represent it objectively, and partly from the laws of that self-consciousness which is not a phenomenon, but the reality itself subjectively conditioned. Since all reality is conscious, there is nothing to prevent our supposing that sensational qualities, even secondary qualities, reveal to us in some measure how reality itself actually *feels*; but the resemblance that true cognition presupposes is more safely to be looked for, for scientific purposes at any rate, in ultimate *relations*, or “forms” of consciousness,—notably succession, coexistence, change, and order of change. In evolutionary terms, knowledge may be regarded as a function of nature whereby she comes to an awareness of the characters that constitute her essence.

5. On the whole, the most usual, and perhaps the most natural affiliation of panpsychism, has been with the hypothesis of a unitary and all-embracing world consciousness.

This is not a logical necessity however; panpsychism may be monadistic, as in Leibniz, and find the spiritual reality of the world of nature in personal beings analogous to the human self, or it may indeed be atomistic, as in the case of Clifford, and subordinate the nature of the self, whether human or divine, to its constituent elements of mind-stuff. And in its recent career both of these tendencies are ably represented, the former in particular by James Ward,<sup>1</sup> the latter by C. A. Strong.

Ward is primarily a psychologist, and his article on Psychology in the ninth edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* was one of the chief influences in bringing about the displacement of the older association psychology by its more humanistic and voluntaristic successor. His earlier book, *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, is a particularly vigorous attack upon the tendencies indicated in the title. It aims to show in the first place that the mechanistic concepts of science are only methodological devices adopted for human convenience. There have been two main ways of defending spiritual interests against naturalistic deductions from the results of science. All that the scientist is inclined to claim for the universality of his laws may be granted freely, and then the sting removed by reinterpreting the whole situation in such a way that mechanism now enters as a subordinate element into a higher category, which, accordingly, does not compete with it at all. Or, on the other hand, we may attempt in various ways to weaken the force of the scientific claims themselves. This in a crude form was the method which supernaturalism had adopted; and in spite of the discredit into which of late it has fallen, logically its case was not a bad one. As against a superstitious veneration for the accepted scientific formulas of the day, at any rate, it was still possible to urge, with Stanley Jevons, the purely tentative and hypothetical character of all laws of science,—which

<sup>1</sup>A very recent defense of the same conception is C. A. Richardson's *Spiritual Pluralism and Recent Philosophy*.

are only inductions from a very limited experience,—the excellent chance that they may later have to be revised, and their failure in any case to account for the peculiar collocations of the agents whose procedure they formulate.

Ward's criticism does not identify itself unambiguously with either of these methods; indeed it is not easy to determine at times to just what issue it is pointed. On the whole, it gives the impression of being negative and destructive, and of leaving the notion of scientific law in a state of bad repair; and yet Ward plainly intends no disrespect to science, but only to some of its philosophical interpreters. The trouble is probably due in the main to a failure to draw sharply enough the lines of division between scientific methodology and metaphysics. What Ward most explicitly denies is the right to interpret the real world ultimately in terms of mechanistic concepts; and his method of doing this is by arguing that the laws of quantitative and descriptive science are not actual transcriptions of reality, but hypothetical devices, selective and partial in their nature, for the securing of intellectual and practical control over a world unmanageable in its full complexity. What is real in its own right, we only come in contact with in concrete and sensuous experience; and since, as a psychologist, Ward had found experience to be fundamentally conative in its nature, teleology and purpose cannot be driven from the universe by mechanism, itself only one of the tools which purposes employ. So far there is nothing to make it necessary to suppose that this ultimate metaphysical interpretation is intended to compete with science, or to enter into *scientific* explanations. But apparently Ward does intend to draw this last conclusion also; and accordingly his disparagement of mechanistic concepts does not stop with their philosophical pretensions, but extends to their scientific use as well. Not only is there no logical necessity attaching to the notion of mechanical law, but in point of fact such law breaks down at many points even in its application to inorganic nature, is

helpless before the problems of qualitative difference and of origin, and has explicitly to be supplemented by the teleological category when we turn to biology and psychology.

The dispute here is one for scientists to settle; meanwhile it may be pointed out that Ward's position is unnecessarily complicated by the failure to make sufficiently clear an obvious distinction. There are scientific concepts—the concept of an atom for example—of which it is possible to claim that they are mere conveniences to the imagination in our efforts at description, without running any risk of interfering in the real business of science; whether they are fictions or realities is a fair question for the philosopher to investigate, but in either case their practical value is much the same. But it is dangerous to use similar language of the actual quantitative *laws* of science. These are “selective,” but they do not seem to be “fictitious”; for unless they formulate, however imperfectly, relationships actually present in reality, how could they have any show of working? It is not probable that Ward really intends to deny this. But through failure to emphasize the necessary discrimination, he sometimes appears to do so; and indeed, when we turn to the metaphysical aspects of his panpsychism, it even becomes doubtful whether this is not the logical issue of his doctrine, and whether a world of psyches is competent to sustain that intricate network of exact quantitative relations which scientific law presupposes.

6. Ward's proof of panpsychism follows in general the customary lines. By a variety of considerations—the demands of the principle of continuity in natural evolution, the inherent plausibility of an hypothesis which looks to the sort of reality we know immediately as a clue to the nature of reality at large, the difficulty of solving the problem of the relation of mind and body on a dualistic view—we are led to the acceptance of consciousness as the omnipresent stuff of which natural objects are the appearance. Just what physical facts reveal the presence of an individual unity of spirit, it is not possible or necessary

always to determine, though in man, the self seems in its external appearance to be identified with the nervous system. More specifically, we are to conceive of the central self or monad as the head of a group of lesser monads in the organism, to which it has a peculiar and direct relationship of spiritual "rapport." Meanwhile these inferior monads also stand related to still others outside the body; and this explains how reports of an external world can come to the self, and how its commands can get executed in this world, without its having any consciousness of the intervening processes. The relation is similar to that which the citizen has to the various officials of the state, of whose methods in his service he may be in entire ignorance.<sup>1</sup>

7. The special purpose of Ward's later volume, *The Realm of Ends*, is to erect a spiritualistic theism on the basis of this panpsychist interpretation. Accepting the methodological principle that any possible philosophy must start from the empirical fact of the finite self, and that a monism which attempts to reverse the process can never logically get back to the finite world at all, an essay is first made to see how far a metaphysical pluralism can go in the way of accounting for the objective order of the world, conceived as the evolutionary construct of finite beings striving for self-realization, and gradually creating what we know phenomenally as scientific law—which is nothing but the routine of acquired habit—as a means of social communication and coöperation. The conclusion is, however, that a thoroughgoing pluralism leaves something still to be desired both at its lower and its upper limit. In terms of origins, it carries us back to monads of a degree of indeterminateness so great as to make the process of evolution,—the evolution of a unity in no sense there at the start,—very hard to conceive; and also it offers no guarantee that the moral and spiritual ideals in which the final meaning of the process lies can ever be satisfactorily attained. A doctrine of

<sup>1</sup> *The Realm of Ends*, pp. 256 ff., 461 ff.

theism which supplements finite monads by a world-ground to whose creative activity their nature, as themselves free and creative agents, is due, which offers an already existing basis to sustain their intercourse, and which can assure the final triumph of the good, is, therefore, in the absence of difficulties fatal to the conception, a plausible and legitimate extension of pluralistic premises, though it can never be rationally demonstrated.

8. It has seemed most reasonable on the whole to interpret Ward's system as consistently theistic and pluralistic; though there are aspects of it which it is not easy to distinguish at times from such an absolutism as that of Pringle-Pattison. In one respect, however, he is even less "realistic" than certain of the monists. Ward conceives that a theory of knowledge which is to justify his results must start from a repudiation of "dualism"; it is a question whether, on the contrary, he is not in this way making them logically insecure. Now dualism has several quite distinct meanings, which it is easy, but dangerous, to lump together. It may mean a dualism of *kind* between mind and matter; and this is the only thing that idealism as such is interested to deny. Or it may mean a dualism of *existence* between the thinking mind and the object which it knows,—epistemological dualism. Or, finally, it may mean a dualism of existence between consciousness and the brain,—which last is of course not the "object" of knowledge; and this is the particular issue for panpsychism in the form in which Ward among others accepts it. Now in urging monism in the first and third senses, Ward appears to suppose that he must hold it in the second sense as well. But not only is there no necessity for this; it is difficult to see how it can be done consistently with a panpsychist metaphysics. For panpsychism holds that there is an actual reality underlying what appears to us phenomenally as the world of nature—the reality of psychic beings, namely; and, supposedly, that there are at least *some* relationships existing among these monads which are

duplicated in our scientific concepts. And unless, with objective idealism, we identify finite knowing with the Absolute, all this involves a necessary duality between knowledge and its object.

In denying this sort of dualism, Ward involves himself in the traditional difficulties present in an attempt to evolve knowledge out of what is not knowledge. "Objectivity," following the prevalent fashion among idealists, Ward undertakes to account for, not as a reference to independent being, but as an ideal convention due to intersubjective intercourse. To recognize these related selves, however, implies also objectivity in a different sense; and if our knowledge is originally tied up to merely perceptual presentations, which involve no independent world, how do we come to possess this acquaintance with social "ejects"? To this very crucial step Ward devotes a couple of sentences,<sup>1</sup> and we find ourselves thereupon engaged with considerations of what follows on the assumption that the step already has been safely taken. And even thus we have not yet got all that panpsychism requires. If the universe on which for science human life depends is but a schematic formulation of the points in common between the various experiences which the social life presupposes, it fails altogether to carry us to that vast world of lower selves with which we are *not* conscious of having any direct social relation. The theoretical need which sub-human monads are supposed to fill, implies that we already are convinced of the actual presence of an independent reality corresponding to the physical world, whose nature we then try more adequately to interpret; and if this assumption is a mistake, and only a misreading of our recognition of identities in the experience of beings already in our social circle, no ground for the extension of the panpsychist hypothesis is apparent.

9. That Ward fails to feel such difficulties as serious is due mainly to a conception of "experience" which he shares with many modern philosophers of various schools, but which by

<sup>1</sup> *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, Vol. II, p. 165.



others will be regarded as a liability rather than an asset. Experience, namely, is not to be thought of as a subjective fact. What we have from the very start is a duality of subject and object in a unity of experience; and in consequence, the need of escaping from subjectivity never occurs. On the interpretation however which Ward goes on to give to this, the solution turns out to be a verbal one. For this unity of experience is recognized after all as identified with the psychological life of an individual, and the object as only a psychological presentation; and that experience starts as perception, rather than as bare feeling, may be granted without appreciably affecting the real problem, which is that of understanding how we get to something that is *not* in any sense the content of an individual life. An object which is a perceptual presentation is still a perception of *mine*, and so after all subjective in the only sense that here comes in question.

10. The merits of panpsychism itself, as a type of philosophical theory, are not easy to appraise in brief. It has called forth a large controversial literature; perhaps special mention should be made of William McDougall's *Mind and Matter*, which is noteworthy for the thoroughness and detail alike of its criticisms, and of its defence of the unpopular alternative theory of interactionism and "animism." Undoubtedly the first reaction of the unsophisticated mind to an interpretation of the physical world in terms of souls or mind-stuff, for the most part unimaginably obscure, is that of incredulity; and this natural feeling has its weight, though it ought not to hold out against strong reason. A more serious matter is the question to what extent such a reinterpretation of the natural world can adjust itself to the needs of scientific knowledge. The most thorough and candid attempt to meet the various objections that can be brought here, is to be found in the writings of C. A. Strong; though this attempt leads to a remodeling of the conception which would not be accepted by the majority of panpsychists.

Strong's metaphysical conclusions are dependent on the apparently paradoxical thesis that the "psychic" is as such not conscious. The term consciousness, that is, is identified with "knowledge"; and knowledge is not an entity, a thing or quality, but a *function*, which need not be bound up with psychic existence. It is this which, to begin with, renders accountable what otherwise would involve a miracle—the origin of consciousness or knowledge in the evolutionary process; consciousness is not a fact of existence which comes into being, but a way in which, through the *medium* of sensation or psychic reality, adjustment is made to the environment. According to this "vehicular" theory of knowledge, knowing has two aspects; there is an "essence" of which the psychic sensation or image is the vehicle, and there is an act of affirmation by which this essence, or logical character, is referred to a reality in relation to the organism. It follows that the object which we know is not a phenomenal representation in consciousness for which an external cause is secondarily inferred; in the act of affirmation we are carried over directly to a non-subjective real, in which the essence is conceived to be embodied. And since this act of knowledge is, again, not itself a new qualitative kind of fact, but a bodily function in terms of the way in which sensation is used to guide the course of action, we can see how it is possible for it to arise in the process of evolution without our having anything new in kind on our hands to account for.

11. Another difficulty for panpsychism, urged by McDougall, is to the effect that a universe of mind-stuff makes no provision for the *unity* of consciousness. Strong meets this objection by denying the supposed fact; the only unity of consciousness is that of a collection of data picked out by an act of cognitive attention, which act itself is not a single thing, but is analyzable, as a bodily reaction, into a complex series of processes. What however of the elementary psychic fact itself? Is not at least a sensation-quality a unity? Here

the vehicular theory of knowledge comes in again. The introspective knowledge of a psychic state, equally with knowledge of outer objects, dispenses with the actual presence of the reality which is known; it is a subsequent act which refers an essence to an experience already in the past. Since consciousness or feeling, therefore, does not belong to the psychical fact as such, but is, as always, a superadded function, we cannot appeal to it as if it could tell us infallibly what the psychic reality is; theoretically there is no reason why here, as elsewhere, our knowledge may not be in error, and why what *seems* a simple quality may not actually be exceedingly complex. This argument, it is true, assumes that consciousness as the way a feeling *feels*, and consciousness as the way it is reflectively *known*, are one and the same; and this seems a very doubtful assumption. But if the identification is granted, then it does logically weaken the claim that the psychical *is* only what we feel it to be, and so opens the way for giving consideration to certain reasons that can be adduced in favor of the belief that what we call a unitary conscious quality may actually be far from simple. Strong is especially inclined to welcome this conclusion, because it enables him to meet one point in particular which otherwise would be a serious objection to his theory—the discrepancy between the apparent simplicity of the sense fact, and the extreme complexity which science reveals to us in the brain process which, by hypothesis, is supposed to be identical with it. If, however, qualities of sense are *not* simple, but are in reality a compound of indefinitely minute feelings, which appear one to introspection only because of our limited powers of discrimination, the objection disappears.<sup>1</sup>

12. One doubt is very likely to suggest itself when we contemplate this outcome; in the supposed interests of reducing reality to the psychical, have we not turned the psychical itself into what only a considerable degree of subtlety enables us to

<sup>1</sup> *The Origin of Consciousness*, Chaps 13, 15, 16.

distinguish from the physical? The ultimate element which underlies the psychical life is an entity about which, it appears, all that we can say with confidence is, that it exists in time and space, that it changes its spatial position, and that it has degrees of attentive vividness or intensity. This last character is, as Strong allows, the only one in the list which prevents our calling the result materialism, and it is also the most obscure and dubious; vividness apart from qualitative content is not quite easy to conceive. Whatever name we choose however to give to our ultimate elements, the essential fact remains that in excluding from the psychic all specific characters which are not common to every psychical state alike, Strong's panpsychism, like materialism, ends by turning qualitative differences out of the universe altogether; if all reality is a combination of non-qualitative bits of stuff, and consciousness and the "essence" only a bodily reaction, sense quality as such has no locus anywhere, and we have simply to deny it—always a hazardous thing to do.

13. Meanwhile one further point may be suggested which, if it is valid at all, applies to all forms of panpsychism alike. A sensation, we have been told, is the reality which to an outside observer will appear phenomenally as a material brain process; is it possible to imagine this situation concretely in a way to satisfy that demand of science from which the theory really takes its start—the demand for a closed system of reality capable of description in terms of mechanical law? I have a sensation of red, we will say, and another man on getting into the proper relationship to this will see it as a physical change of some sort in my brain. And all the other real facts in the universe he conceivably might perceive under the same physical appearance as continuous with this, *with one exception*—his own conscious state of perceiving, namely. This last, while he is experiencing it, cannot in the nature of the case enter for him into the continuum of molecular changes which forms the system of science, and so it constitutes an outstanding fact

that refuses to accept phenomenal or scientific formulæ. Even if it were conceivable that by some ingenious device I could be enabled to watch my own brain process while I was sensing red, I still should not be looking at the *new* perception which this would involve; no matter how long I kept it up, that which I see, and my seeing it, could never merge one in the other, because they never would be the same in character. And if it is urged that while no one can see his own mental process while it is happening, he can *think* it, and so take it up ideally into a unified scientific whole, the answer is the same; to think the reality representatively there must first be a *new thought* to do the thinking. It is this thought now that stands outside the system as concretely imaginable; if we try to bring it in, there must be still another thought; and so always the chain of phenomenal reality is bound to leave one fact outside, and the perfect unity of science fails to be achieved.

§ 3. *Realism. Shadworth Hodgson. Hobhouse. Santayana*

1. The preceding sections have had in view primarily certain developments of philosophical idealism; there remain to be considered here a number of tendencies that may roughly be characterized as realistic, though the term is so ambiguous that by itself it conveys no very distinct idea. It can be applied more strictly to theories which accept the reality of the physical universe in something like its common-sense or its scientific form. In a different sense however,—as an epistemological term,—realism means only that in knowledge we become acquainted with reality other than the knowing process, leaving it to be determined in further ways what the nature of this reality may be.

This epistemological realism, usually with the implication of a dualism, has been involved in a majority of the idealistic tendencies just reviewed, though for the most part it has been

subordinate here to a metaphysical interest. Quite recently, however, it has shown a disposition to detach itself from metaphysics, and to give rise to a brisk discussion in its own character as a theory of knowledge. The most influential defender of an epistemological realism which refuses to abandon the belief in "mental states," is the psychologist G. F. Stout. Stout's theory of perception has been modified from time to time; in its latest form it holds that immediately apprehended sensibles carry with them always an ultimate and undefinable sort of reference to reality beyond themselves as their source. This reference, however, is to the whole source indiscriminately, the correlation of given qualities with a definite portion of reality, so that this becomes a particular thing distinguished from other things, being a secondary act due to discoverable psychological conditions; and in this way accordingly we are enabled to explain the presence of errors and illusions, without casting any doubt upon the validity of the ultimate reference itself. Apparently, however, these sensibles are not to be taken as if they revealed a nature belonging to the source in the absence of perception; though they constitute its true appearance in the sense that they represent the way in which it expresses itself under assignable conditions.<sup>1</sup> A later variation of a realistic epistemology has already been mentioned in connection with the panpsychism of C. A. Strong. The distinctive point in Strong's "vehicular" theory is its unqualified repudiation of the assumption that we first know sensations or internal presentations and then make an inference from them to the external cause, and its substitution of abstract characters or essences for concrete presentations, as that which alone is immediately apprehended. Recently there has appeared a coöperative volume called *Essays in Critical Realism*, by a number of American writers of whom Strong is one, in which, though with modifications in detail in the various essays, there is agreement on the point that the known object

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, Vol. XIV, pp 381 ff., 404 f.

is not identically given in experience, and that nevertheless the reference to it is original, and not a causal inference.

2. Meanwhile, though more infrequently,—apart, that is, from the special developments of neo-realism to be considered in another chapter,—a realistic theory of knowledge is combined in some recent writers with a physical realism more or less explicit. An ontological dualism, resting on a dualistic epistemology which follows the traditional lines of the “representative” theory, has never ceased to maintain itself against all types of monism in Catholic philosophy, whose revival in the neo-scholasticism of recent times is a significant philosophical tendency;<sup>1</sup> and a not dissimilar combination is sometimes found where the influence of Scottish common sense still persists, though the account of knowledge here is apt to be modified in the direction of Kant. Thus Henry Sidgwick may be mentioned in particular as inclining to a natural dualism which conceives of objectively valid knowledge in terms of relationships attributed to an independent reality by the knowing mind. In other cases realism is accompanied by a still more sophisticated epistemology, which at times might probably be classified as neo-realistic. Here belongs, for example, the *Physical Realism* of Thomas Case. On the assumption that a theory of knowledge is called upon to find a way of accounting for the accredited testimony of science, rather than to deduce the possibilities of knowledge from human nature, the fact that science puts its trust in a world inaccessible to the senses is by itself enough to set aside an idealism such as would reduce knowledge to sensations. On the other hand, Case takes for granted that biology has undermined the naïve realism which supposes that we know directly outer things, by showing that, instead, the first objects of knowledge are the sensible effects which things have upon the inner organism. When we say that

<sup>1</sup> Among Catholic philosophers may be mentioned Peter Coffey, Thomas N. Harper, Howard Joyce, Michael Maher, John Rickaby, and Lester J. Walker.

we perceive a tree, this perception is in reality an inference from sensible data, though an inference so long performed automatically that we cannot now disengage it. But now if external objects can be scientifically inferred from sensible data, it must be that these data are themselves not psychical, but physical, since in logic an inference can pass only to what is similar in kind. The true sensible object is thus the nervous system itself; when I am apprehending "white," I am really perceiving the optic nerves sensibly affected in the manner apprehended as white. And if an external and physical world can properly be inferred as something necessary to explain the internal—but still physical—effect on the nervous system, so I have an equal right to infer to the insensible realm of scientific theory,—a realm stripped now of secondary qualities, though not of primary ones,—if this in turn is needed to explain the crude physical objects of empirical sense perception. Meanwhile the sensible object needs to be distinguished not only from its external cause, but also, on the other hand, from the internal operation of apprehending it; and it is this last alone which constitutes the psychical. Two factors, accordingly, combine in all conscious operations; man is to be regarded as a physical body which is not merely an extended substance, but which has the faculty of thought or awareness as well. In thus reducing consciousness to an act of awareness of physical content, Case anticipates the most characteristic doctrine of later English neo-realism; the contention however that this awareness, as a peculiar relation of subject to object, is directly of events within the nervous system, events actually characterized by secondary qualities which have as such no existence outside the organism, has apparently found no followers.

Another more recent attempt to justify realistically the concepts of physical science is C. D. Broad's *Perception, Physics, and Reality*, an acute and very painstaking examina-



tion of the perceptual situation, of which the outcome is, that in spite of the fact that the immediate objects of perception are probably all appearances, nothing in the facts of illusion, or in the multiplicity of perspectives in which objects reveal themselves to different observers, prevents our believing in a non-phenomenal cause of our perceptions, possessing a knowable nature in terms of the particular characters needed by physical science. In America, also, R. W. Sellars has defended a realistic account of knowledge which attempts to avoid alike the immediate or apprehensional theory of natural realism, and a dualistic or representational theory, by the process of reducing cognitive "ideas" to an apprehension of "propositions"—apparently, that is, of "relations" not identifiable with sensations or imagery—about an independent real. Here consciousness is made explicitly a function of the physical; it is the reality of the cortex illuminating and guiding itself. Another American representative of realism is G. S. Fullerton, who in his later writings defends the world of everyday experience, including even secondary qualities, as independently real, though he leaves the mechanism of knowledge somewhat obscure.

3. There remain several recent philosophies of a more comprehensive and systematic sort, which in view of their realistic emphasis belong most naturally in this connection. Of these the earliest, and the most difficult to classify satisfactorily, is that of Shadworth Hodgson. Hodgson sets out from a conception of metaphysical method which is a peculiar compound of logic and psychology not easy to disentangle. He professes to start from an analysis of experience wholly without pre-suppositions. Now the most ultimate distinction that we thus discover—and we find it in the simplest possible element of experience that we can isolate and attend to by itself—is, not that of Subject and Object,—of an agent, that is, separable from the thing it knows, and exercising causal efficiency,—but

of Consciousness and Object, as two inseparable aspects of one and the same ultimate entity, from which all distinctions of existence must be derived in some later moment of reflection.

If we attempt to interpret these statements, what stands out most plainly is this, that Hodgson's method takes its start, not, as previous empiricism had done, from experience as sensational fact, but from an analysis of its *logical characters*. It attempts to presuppose only the "whatness" of experienced content, as distinct from its "thatness" or existence. This is not the direction in which we should be first inclined to turn; it seems rather more natural to suppose that the "natures" present in the world are capable of being held before the mind in their logical simplicity, only because "things" have first been recognized which possess these natures; "logical" facts seem to presuppose already a considerable work of analysis. And also the inevitable question at once arises, whether this does not leave on our hands an insoluble problem; is it any more possible to make the transition from logic to existence, if we once start with the former, than it is to begin with psychology, and pass to an existence independent of consciousness? There is indeed one possible interpretation of the method for which the difficulty would not exist. It might be that we are simply taking over our existing *beliefs*, and analyzing them to see what they really are, or imply; in that case existence will undoubtedly emerge, since we do of course believe in existence. On this showing, the inseparability of consciousness and object would mean—and there are frequent utterances of Hodgson, indeed, which suggest this strongly—only that all content which we can talk about at all is *known* content, reality that is not a possible object of knowledge being meaningless to us,—this abstract and ultimate fact of awareness being distinguishable, of course, only as a matter of logical analysis from the whatness of knowledge. And the metaphysical priority of a logical analysis to any science that deals with existence would then mean, that the validity of objective content, or whatness, is

independent of the fact that the knowing process arises at a particular point in time, and has a momentary existence. But all this evidently is as far as possible from a philosophy "without presuppositions"; and it is mostly irrelevant to Hodgson's actual procedure.

4. The way in which Hodgson himself attempts to effect the passage from logic to existence is exceedingly ingenious. It starts from the thesis that the least possible empirical moment of experience is, not a qualitative content simply, but a process as well; we find it a complex of which quality and *duration* are inseparable aspects. And this duration aspect involves *memory*; the persistence of qualitative content means that the simplest momentary experience always contains implicitly the distinction of past and present. Now in a single moment,—in the experience, say, of hearing a note, A,—there is no recognition of duplicity. But if A be followed by a second note B, A then becomes, by virtue of the fact of duration or memory, a "that" as well as a "what"; the later portion of the process continued into B has its own prior portion, together with the content of that portion, as its *object*, from which it is now distinguished as a subjective perceiving. The process-content of one moment is thus always the object or objective aspect of the next or retrospective moment; and this is the perception of existence in its lowest terms.<sup>1</sup>

It seems very doubtful whether this first and crucial step in Hodgson's analysis can be regarded as successful. Even if—and this is by no means clear—the logical character of duration can be supposed to generate the psychological act of memory or perceiving—can be taken as the equivalent of "consciousness,"—it still is not evident how "existence" enters in. That we can be aware of that which is merely a "whatness," the whole analysis presupposes; and there appears no reason why a *past* "what" should turn thereupon into a "that," as a fact of a new order. It is difficult not to think that Hodgson

<sup>1</sup> *Metaphysic of Experience*, Vol I, pp 59 ff.

imagines himself to have gotten hold of "existence" here, only because he really has had in his mind all along something more than logical content—the *sensation*, namely, to which the "quality" belongs. This of course is an existent; but it is *presupposed* to be such, and existence has not been deduced from a presuppositionless content.

And in any case, even if the transition be regarded as accomplished, Hodgson, after all his trouble, still is left with the traditional difficulties of empiricism on his hands; and his method from now on becomes the familiar attempt to derive a cosmos from "states of consciousness." His account of the passage from objects as mental presentations to objects as physical existents ranks high among similar attempts for ingenuity.<sup>1</sup> Indeed it is so ingenious as to inspire great respect for the primitive intelligence which could conduct a line of reasoning so subtle and complicated that it puts a strain even on the philosophic mind to follow it. But in the end it gets its way, as usual, only by smuggling in the point to be established. Meanwhile it should not be overlooked, however, that Hodgson's treatment has at least a distinct advantage over Kantian idealism, in its explicit recognition that knowledge as such is not a cause or ground of existence, and that any possible analysis in terms of timeless cognitive content must be supplemented, if we are ever to come into contact with the real world of agents which common sense and science alike presuppose.

5. Apart from the ambiguities of his method, the general outcome of Hodgson's philosophy is comparatively straightforward. The only real condition or agency with which we are acquainted is matter. Consciousness itself is a condition neither of matter, nor of other conscious content; and when we turn therefore to psychology as a science, it is to the body alone that we can appeal for purposes of causal explanation. But it is only the occurrence, the coming into existence, of conscious-

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. I, Chaps. 7, 8.

ness which is thus explained; matter is a condition, but not a cause, if we mean by cause something capable of accounting for the entire fact of consciousness, including its "whatness" also. Consciousness is indeed itself the source from which our concrete notion of matter is derived, so that it cannot be explained by a matter whose own nature is given in terms which it supplies. While, then, in dealing with the world of existences and of explanatory science,—whose aim it is to discover the conditions of becoming, and not of essences,—Hodgson is thoroughgoing in the denial of any efficacy whatever to consciousness, the nature or whatness of consciousness is an ultimate fact, which brings us after all in closer contact with metaphysical reality than matter does.

Furthermore, although matter is the only real condition knowable by us, we are forced by the demands of complete explanation to seek for matter itself a more ultimate condition, since it is not self-explanatory; and so we are pointed to an unseen world behind the visible one. The nature of this world is cut off from the speculative reason, though in strictness it is not unknowable; for if the very notion of reality is bound up with knowability, then even to think existence means that it has in so far its subjective aspect, since it forms an object of thought. What we mean by its unknowableness is only that its direct and presentative features are not open to our special type of consciousness; although, since we have good dialectical reason to accept its existence, we must suppose that there is consciousness of a different sort that does know them. But while thus we can have no speculative knowledge of the nature of this invisible universe that conditions the material one, we are also led to recognize that the *practical* reason, under the stress of emotional feeling, cannot avoid clothing it in the only imagery at its disposal; and by this path we are forced to think of it as a conscious and personal Power such as knows the hidden motives of the heart, and in whom the perfect harmony of desires that constitutes the criterion

of morally right action is, or will be, completely realized. And so long as we remember that this has no speculative validity, —though it has its necessary cause in the neural processes which condition all belief,—such a Faith, as the basis of the religious consciousness, has all the justification it requires.<sup>1</sup>

6. In somewhat more obvious relation to earlier English naturalism, and especially to J. S. Mill, is the philosophical work of L. T. Hobhouse, who carries on Mill's empiricism, and his political liberalism as well, with something of the same spirit and the same comprehensiveness. In Hobhouse, however, the familiar metaphysics of empiricism is very materially modified. To begin with, the doctrine of an apprehension of immediate sense content or fact, apart entirely from thought processes, is interpreted as from the start an awareness or assertion of extra-conscious reality. As a matter of fact there is some difficulty in gathering from Hobhouse's treatment whether there is such a thing as sensation at all in the older empirical sense, and if there is, just how it stands related to the objective content of knowledge on the one hand, and the "act" of apprehension on the other. This content of immediate apprehension we come consciously to recognize *as* an independent existence by reflection upon certain peculiarities in our experience. The phenomena of experience are found dividing into two groups which have different modes of behavior, contents that range themselves along with my aches and pains as dependent on my body, no matter in what part of space I am, getting classed together as the self, while those which are given in permanent space relations, or which change their relations in accordance with uniform laws of motion, form another group. And the objects in this last group not only are separate from other psychical facts of feeling, but as a consequence of our discovering universal laws in the occurrence of phenomena, they are shown to be independent even of the act of consciousness that makes them objects of per-

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, pp. 209 ff, 225, 334 ff.

ception. For since a fact often occurs in experience without anyone observing at the time the prior fact which a conformity of past experience has shown to be its cause, this operates as a negative instance to eliminate the character of "being perceived" as a necessary part of the cause; and as the cause actually has produced its effect, it must therefore exist unperceived.

It is to be added further that, although apprehension is prior to the thinking process, among the contents of immediate apprehension are to be found not only sensational qualities but relations, which are, therefore, a part of the given, and not, as the Kantians suppose, a contribution by the "mind." Meanwhile the business of thought, as distinct from apprehension, is to build up the given data into a concrete system, by the methods of analysis, memory—which is an awareness of a content as past, as apprehension is the awareness of content as present,—construction into wholes, and generalization. The validity of such a system is tested by the convergence of many judgments each adding additional weight to the rest, the corroboration which the various methods lend to one another constituting also the rational justification of the methods themselves. The only *a priori* elements in experience are thus the *operations* of the mind that deal with the given. These functions are themselves not given, since they would exist, and perform their work, though they were never explicitly observed; but also they supply no content, which last comes from sense apprehension only.

7. In his earlier book, *The Theory of Knowledge*, Hobhouse inclines to an empirical caution in making claims about the nature of the real system to which thought points. Negatively, neither the mechanical nor the teleological category can be equal to it; probably the concept of an organism is most nearly adequate. Meanwhile, though teleology cannot be applied to the world as a whole, it is a real fact *in* the world. As the self, or psycho-physical whole,—the intimate, though confessedly

mysterious, union of consciousness and its bodily conditions,—develops the power of intelligent prevision, the process of evolution comes more and more to be modified by its action; though the natural conditions which thus prove amenable to intelligence cannot themselves be reduced to the creation of conscious purpose. It is here apparently that Hobhouse's chief interest in ultimate questions about the nature of reality is located—in the desire to find a ground for that confidence in the possibility and permanence of human progress which is the informing spirit of Liberalism.

In a later volume, *Development and Purpose*, Hobhouse goes further in a speculative attempt to show our right to extend to the universe as a whole that conception of purposive development, definable as a process moving under the control of the idea of its own causal tendency, which experience reveals to us as the reality and meaning of human life. In the impulse toward organic harmony and self-realization, working under the limiting conditions of the body on which the mind's existence depends, and gradually subduing these, we are to find a clue to what on a larger scale is the most reasonable interpretation of the cosmic order also. This harmony does not by itself explain existence, else the world would be already perfect; reality is not spiritual, but the spiritual is an aspect of reality, the moving force of ethical development. We can feel assured, however, that what exists must be *capable* of being harmonized, since otherwise we should be threatening the validity of our whole understanding of experience, which we can only define, in a way to give us rational satisfaction, in terms of development along definite lines of tendency. Reality, then, at any given time, is a system of elements conditioning, and conditioned by, a principle of organization leading up to an ultimate harmony; and through this principle everything real is thus related to the harmony, in spite of the discord which we have to recognize as a feature of reality at the start. In thus reducing Mind, however, which alone renders development



intelligible, to one aspect only of a completer whole, in which the conditions to be overcome still *seem* to our thought to be external, it is not apparent that, save in intention, Hobhouse has really succeeded in overcoming a troublesome dualism,—a dualism which is not to be avoided by *calling* the reality one, or even by calling it psycho-physical. It is significant that Hobhouse is compelled to admit that such a Mind can hardly be similar to what we know as mind; which is only a roundabout way of saying that the conception cannot really be construed by us.

8. Standing apart from all the accredited philosophical schools of the day, and notable also as one of the almost negligible number of philosophical writers who are literary artists as well as thinkers, is the representative of still another type of naturalism,—a naturalism which, as in the case of George Meredith, is itself explicitly an ideal value, rather than a mere handmaid to science. George Santayana's lack of influence in proportion to the weight of his contribution to philosophical sanity and clarity, perhaps due in part to the academic distrust of literary gifts, is also not unconnected with a tone of condescension which he is apt to adopt toward competing views, as calling rather for indulgence than for serious argument. In consequence his work is more impressive as an imaginative picture of a certain outlook on the spiritual life of man, than for its explicit dialectical grounding. The leading motive is suggested by the title of his chief work, *The Life of Reason*; it is an insistence on the need for a rationalization of experience, in terms solely of the natural life, while yet recognizing the central place in life of value, or the ideal. This *Life of Reason* takes two forms, whose logical relation is on the surface not entirely evident. For purposes of explanation, Reason can be satisfied only with science and mechanism. The source of all that happens is, unequivocally, the physical world, of which the bodily organism is that portion which constitutes "myself,"—a world concerning which it is of the first

importance to recognize that it is neither logical nor moral, but just a brute given fact. And matter is the *only* causal agent; consciousness is simply a natural product which is not a cause, but a *report* of what is going on in the organism, the voice of the body's interests, the witness and reward of its operations.

But while consciousness thus is useless, it is not worthless; indeed, it is the only seat and source of worth. The physical as such has no significance. Merely because a thing happens to exist gives it no claim whatever on our approval. It is in the recognition, not of existence or causality, but of preferable-ness, of the satisfying quality of such ends as the body strives for that it may harmonize and fulfil its natural needs, that value lies; and so the second task of Reason is to constitute that ideal realm wherein nature takes on form and value as viewed from the vantage-ground of a human interest, and becomes rational in proportion as the life of impulse is brought into a harmonious whole. Reason, then, must on the one hand recognize the source of the ideal always in matter, and decline to confuse scientific inquiry into causes by considerations of end or meaning; moral interest involves special preferences of a particular organism, by which it is chimerical to expect the rest of the world to be determined. And yet this implies on the other hand that values, through the very fact that they are *not* causes in the natural world, have their own intrinsic validity as essences within the life of Reason itself, inexpugnable so long as we are consistent in refusing to materialize the ideal, and bring it down into the realm of existences to play a part among other things. Such a materializing of the ideal is "superstition"; we first turn the facts of living into a myth or symbol,—as we have a right to do if it enhances their value,—but then go on to substantialize these myths, and forget their merely poetic function, using thus our false persuasion of the invisible presence of the ideal to justify and protract its absence. Briefly, then, to unite a trustworthy con-

ception of the conditions under which man lives with an adequate conception of his interests, to adjust all demands to one ideal and adjust that ideal to its natural conditions,—this is to live the life of Reason.

9. The method which Santayana chooses for recommending his philosophy, as has been said before, is on the whole more effective in bringing home its æsthetic appeal than in straightening out speculative tangles. There is very slight attempt to prove—what it would clearly be impossible to prove in any strict sense—that value is the product of purely mechanical and unideal processes, that consciousness is an epiphenomenon without practical efficacy, that purpose is impossible as an objective category; and the critical objections that have been many times brought against such doctrines are given scant consideration. Nor is this from Santayana's standpoint an unreasonable attitude; if reason consists in a perceived harmony of ideal values, we might expect the prestige of his naturalism to be found resting less upon scientific or dialectic argument than on its own inherent reasonableness—on the satisfying emotional or æsthetic appeal, that is, which it makes to the contemplative mind. Even practical considerations are not relevant here; the pragmatic argument that only by looking for effective causality in the mechanical and the physical are we enabled to control experience, and lead the natural life successfully, hardly comes in question, since knowledge belongs to that life of ideal essence which is totally ineffective, and the body will act as is its nature to act in any case. If we are to understand the force of the appeal which physical naturalism makes, we must look for it where all value lies—in the life of ideal Reason itself; we must justify the scientific explanation of value as itself a value. And there is unquestionably an emotional appeal just in the sense that we have got down to the bedrock of reality denuded of all subjective and meretricious charms, that our mind is working impersonally on fact, and facing without flinching whatever existence has

to offer, regardless of personal or even human demands. And so taken, we can see how the scientific background may itself form an integral part of the ideal life of which it is supposed to be the independent and unideal basis, and so can bring together after a fashion the two forms of the work of Reason.

10. One point however continues to be troublesome when we turn to the ideal itself. The conception of a naturalistic ethics, wherein the bodily functions are transmuted into felt values unspoiled by sentimentalism or by superstition, we are apparently not to understand in the sense in which to most men it would approve itself. In strictness it would seem that the good can hardly after all consist in living a harmonious life of the instincts. The life of Reason consists not in natural living in its own right, but in its translation into terms of ideal and rational appreciation; it belongs to the realm of essence, and not of existence, while action is a member of this latter world. For our ordinary view there is no difficulty here, because the ability to recognize cognitively the nature of natural value is also a tool for getting it more adequately realized; reason is itself an aspect of satisfying conduct. But if consciousness has absolutely no practical efficacy, but is only a "sort of ritual solemnizing the chief episodes in the body's fortunes," we are forced to reinterpret our natural prejudice in favor of conduct; value will consist not in living the harmonious life, but in contemplating and understanding its ideal harmony.

And this seems actually to be the outcome. The good for Santayana limits itself in the end to the exercise of Reason on its ideal material; it is a value that rests on "rational" activity merely with its twofold satisfaction—the satisfaction that comes from the unhampered exercise of mind, when to this is added the æsthetic charm which the mind's creations may possess. In a word, the one true value lies in the vision of the artist clarified by reason, and working on the stuff of life itself,—the ideal of a contemplative participation in eternal truth and beauty. Such an ideal has a real claim to rank

among human goods. And it is by reason of this standpoint of contemplation rather than of action,—where varying ideals are apt fatally to collide,—that Santayana is able to offer so wide a hospitality to individual differences of ideal, without apparently feeling the need to subordinate them to any general standard of the good. But just on this account it may be urged that he has forfeited the right to set up his own individual ideal as the one authoritative form of good, which is what he really does when he ties it up with the whole intellectual understanding of the universe which as reasonable beings we are bound to accept, and even, one may suspect, finds in it implicitly at least his major premise.

II. One further aspect of the situation calls for some attention on the part of metaphysics. Perhaps the most difficult point in Santayana's system is the status to be assigned to "essences." An essence, on the simplest interpretation, represents the "nature" of things, as this enters into consciousness to constitute knowledge; it is the stuff out of which the life of Reason is formed, the dialectical setting forth of whose eternal relationships constitutes the realm of logic. But whence comes this immensely intricate world of ideal natures? Santayana's naturalism would prepare us to suppose that its source lies in the physical world of science; and this in so far is an intelligible claim, though open to the difficulty, traditionally attaching to all materialisms, that many characters have a place in the ideal life of which physics knows absolutely nothing. But when we try to bring the more explicit philosophy of nature into connection with the doctrine of essence, no such simple theory will satisfy the requirements.

In the first place, when we consider the claim that science itself is a form of the life of Reason, a doubt is bound to suggest itself whether some casuistic reservation is not present in the use of the prestige of natural science to support the system. In point of fact, while the outcome appears constantly to presuppose the realistic concept of a law-abiding physical

process independent of human experience, and capable of being definitely and precisely characterized in scientific terms, Santayana's philosophical interpretation suggests a quite different picture. For the stuff of reality, we are told, is just the flux of sense experience itself,<sup>1</sup> "nature" being an ideal construct belonging only to the realm of essence; science, equally with religion, is a myth or symbol, though it is a *fruitful* symbol, in that we are enabled by it to predict actual occurrences in the universal flux. But a flux of sensations means a very different sort of world from the realistic world which science and common sense take for granted; it is not at all clear how the one has any community with the other. And indeed Santayana's account of the "objects" which a realistic view would seem to imply, as a local conglomeration of several simultaneous sensations cut out from the flux by a particular interest, points definitely to the older sensationalism, rather than to realism.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile another element of uncertainty enters in, when we try to understand the relation of the "essence" to this natural world. It would be simplest to suppose that the essence—its qualitative basis that is—is actually present in the flux, and that the mythical character of "nature" means only that our human constructs are a selection from the immensely more complicated structure of the natural world. And this is indeed what the preceding account of "objects" appears to involve; essences are described as ultimate and unexplainable characters of the flux of experience itself, which come to consciousness as ideal entities through the revival in memory of similar sensations temporally distinct, and which must be thus recognized as a precondition for the construction of objects. It is such a conception that explains the doctrine of the ineffectiveness of consciousness; if an idea is simply the recognition of a character common to different portions of the stream of sensation, it can of course have no causal effect upon

<sup>1</sup> *Reason in Common Sense*, pp. 124 f.    <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Ch. 7.

the flow of this stream. But now along with this there is another, and a seemingly inconsistent interpretation. This is the conception of essences as inhabiting an ideal realm *apart* from all that exists. Nothing, we are told, can ever exist in nature or for consciousness which has not a prior and independent locus in a realm of essences. The foundation of being is distinguishable quality, and were there no sets of differing characters, one or more of which an existing thing might "appropriate," existence would be altogether impossible. There is an infinite storehouse of such natures on which we draw to clothe the universal flux, though only such as are suggested by matter and its functions can really enter into experience for us. The superiority of the "real world"—the selection of essences from this ideal realm which it has been found convenient to read into the brute facts of sense—over other possible worlds, lies only in the greater interest it possesses for a being himself the product of nature.<sup>1</sup> In the *Life of Reason* these latter claims, indeed, it would appear are only intended to apply to the dialectical relations that hold between empirical characters;<sup>2</sup> and in that case they stand for what is indeed a plausible account of the apparent fact. But if essence as such is to be located in a higher and independent realm, we are dealing with a much more ambitious and speculative contention, which opens up all the difficulties that traditionally attach to a Platonic realism.

12. One further essay in the direction of realism, though it was left in so unfinished a form that it is impossible to say what its final complexion would have been, is that of Robert Adamson. Adamson made his reputation originally as one of the most distinguished and most learned of the idealistic school; toward the close of his life, however, he conceived himself to have broken, in some considerable measure at least, with its accepted tenets. What most definitely he repudiates is the de-

<sup>1</sup> *Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. VIII, pp. 60 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Reason in Science*, pp. 146 f.

pendence of reality upon self-consciousness. From this he turns to a more naturalistic conception; the self already presupposes experience as objective, in that the object cannot be regarded as its creation. The primitive foundation for objectivity lies in the spatial character of experience. At times this seems to leave self-consciousness as the efflorescence of a physical reality which exists independent of awareness, the character of inner reference which constitutes the psychical being the quality of a certain configuration that emerges in the process of development.<sup>1</sup> Other passages point rather to a more psychological conception of experience as the medium in which all distinctions whatsoever arise, self and not-self developing *pari passu*. At least, however, it would appear that for Adamson reality is a real process or growth, not indeed guided by a conscious end, but nevertheless genuinely creative, and passing into new forms; it is inconsistent therefore with the eternal completeness of absolutism. If the objective world can be called non-temporal, it is only in the sense that, as the common point of reference for the experiences of a number of similar percipient subjects, it is taken as logical content, and so as abstracted from existence.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Development of Modern Philosophy*, Vol. I, pp. 355 f.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 275, 305.



## CHAPTER VII

### PRAGMATISM

#### § 1. *C. S. Peirce. Schiller*

1. A definition of pragmatism is hardly attainable that will do justice to all the various motives that influence its adherents. The most unequivocal and universal motive is, perhaps, the negative one of an opposition to "intellectualism," with its world of static perfection and logical completeness. This opposition is of course not limited to the pragmatists; voluntarism, so-called, has been seen already to enter largely into latter-day philosophy, and there are points at which personal idealism and pragmatism come so closely together that it is not an easy matter to distinguish them. But while both make use of the newer psychology with its teleological background, and its acceptance of the temporal process, they use it in the service of somewhat different interests. The concern for individuality and selfhood is, at least in the more thoroughgoing forms of pragmatism, supplanted almost wholly by an emphasis on the general laws and conditions of progress, in which the person tends to be a vanishing moment. Accordingly there is in pragmatism a much closer community in method with the larger and more impersonal scientific movements of the day; indeed these form on the whole its most important intellectual antecedent. Pragmatism stands for the importation into philosophy of the experimental attitude which science represents,—an experimentalism with a strongly positivistic tone, for which ideas are fruitful hypotheses and ways of getting results, rather

than attempts at describing an independently real world. Especially close is the connection with Darwinism, with its substitution of a fluid process of adjustment and readjustment for the fixed boundary lines of the older conceptions of nature. It is only as method, however,—a method to be applied primarily to social and political experience rather than to the physical world,—that science particularly interests the pragmatist; and it is in these social bearings that probably his most distinctive motive is to be looked for. On this side, pragmatism is an expression of the more radical forms of the modern democratic temper, with its distrust of political institutions established once for all, and not subject to the free play of intelligence.

2. The first to use the term pragmatism in this connection was the American scientist and logician Charles S. Peirce; and Peirce was recognized by James at least as one of the original sources of his own pragmatic doctrine. As a matter of fact the content to be traced back to this particular source is not very substantial, and Peirce himself later repudiated the glosses that James had put upon it. Peirce is explicit in denying that thought creates its object, and definitely subscribes to the belief in a reality whose characters are independent of what anybody may think them to be. The function of the will in matters of belief is to control thought, to exercise cautious doubt, to weigh reasons; and this is the exact reverse of James' "will to believe," which is the will *not* to exercise this sceptical will. So Peirce refuses to accept the appeal to "consequences," in its more obvious personal and social sense; "I must confess," he writes for example, "that I belong to that class of scallawags who prefer, with God's help, to look the truth in the face, whether doing so be conducive to the interests of society or not."

Peirce's own pragmatism, which is a doctrine of the "meaning of ideas" rather than of "truth," is not itself free from obscurities, in spite of the fact that it forms the burden of an article on *How to Make our Ideas Clear*. Its original statement

is as follows: "Consider what effects, *which conceivably might have practical bearings*, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then our conception of these effects is the whole of our conception of the object." From the context, and from at least some of the illustrations adduced, one would suppose this merely intended to recommend the experimental habit of mind characteristic of the scientist who is unwilling to take the meaning of his ideas from authority, or from an analysis of their conceptual definition, but who insists upon putting them to work to see what they will amount to in perceptual terms, and what further perceptual characteristics they will develop. The meaning of ideas is simply what they come to in the concrete; "our idea of anything *is* our idea of its sensible effects." And this means not the effect in some particular practical situation, but in all discoverable situations; the meaning of a proposition is "a general description of all the experimental phenomena which the assertion of the proposition virtually predicts." Truth, meanwhile, carries for Peirce an entirely different sense. Truth is the mental state at which inquiry aims, the satisfied feeling that ensues as we pass from doubt to settled belief,—not any satisfaction at random, but the satisfaction which *would* ultimately be found if the inquiry were pushed far enough, and whose experimental equivalent, or meaning, is the consensus of opinion among qualified investigators.<sup>1</sup> In the outcome, then, the meaning of life would seem to reduce itself, for Peirce, to habits of experimental inquiry that aim to satisfy the intellectual demands of the scientific temper. And if this is the case, the phrase about "practical bearings" on which James seized, becomes either supererogatory, or actually confusing; since if it refers to the action involved in scientific "experiment" it is already sufficiently covered, while any ulterior form of conduct introduces a new set of considerations with which the rest of the definition has no obvious point of connection. For habits of action are expressly regarded as hav-

<sup>1</sup> *Popular Science Monthly*, Vol. XII, pp. 286 ff.

ing their source in beliefs already formed; while it is to the process of forming these beliefs that the rule for making ideas clear applies.

Peirce seems also to have influenced James on the metaphysical side by his doctrine, based on logical rather than on ethical grounds however, of the real presence of chance and indetermination in the world, and by a radical evolutionary interpretation of "law" as itself evolved from an original chaos of unpersonalized feeling, with a spontaneous tendency to growth and to the formation of habit. Such habits, as they become inveterate, are what we know as physical laws, matter being thus definable as effete mind, mind canalized in definite channels. Apparently this is a fate destined to overtake all reality in the remote future.

3. As an explicit philosophy, pragmatism has developed along three main lines, more or less independent in their origin, and by no means identical in outcome. In England, its most prominent exponent is F. C. S. Schiller; and Schiller's pragmatism is on the whole the least novel of the three. A great part of what he has to say in detail may readily be interpreted without making it necessary to assume any radically new philosophic standpoint; it is the continuation of a tendency that had for a number of years been gathering momentum,—a tendency which has appeared in some of the forms of idealism dealt with in the preceding chapter, and, even earlier, in Newman's *Grammar of Assent*. This affiliation is indicated in Schiller's choice of the term Humanism as a badge for his philosophy; and it explains his frequent claim that pragmatism is primarily a *method* of truth only, which commits one to no specific metaphysical conclusions. Humanism means in a general way the grounding of knowledge in human nature, rather than in abstract principles. As such, it involves a variety of connected claims:—that thinking is a mode of conduct, an expression of human living, and so to be understood only in connection with the specific situations it is intended to meet; that

psychology, therefore, and not logic or dialectic solely, is essential to its proper understanding, that the question of validity is not to be separated from that of genesis; that the service which knowledge performs is a service to the entire man, so that moral and spiritual interests have the right to a word about its direction, and the determination of its success; that as the life of man is practical and not primarily speculative, the foundations of knowledge rest on an active faith instead of on absolute and self-evident principles—are postulates rather than *a priori* axioms; and that, as against a ready-made, cut-and-dried, unprogressive knowledge, whose claim to our respect is its immobility and dogmatic certainty, the system of human truth is a plastic, growing organism, limited by no static facts at one end, and no static ideals at the other, and interested in the problem of changing the world and bettering man's lot, rather than in contemplating an eternal perfection.

There is nothing so far that might not conceivably be accepted by philosophers of a fairly wide variety of types. It is when we turn to a further claim, that what has popularly been attributed to pragmatism as its distinctive doctrine appears. In a general way, this may be put in the form of a contention that truth, or knowledge, is a creative act, to which reality itself is due. It is usually very difficult to determine, however, in just what sense such a claim is meant to be taken. If, as is possible, we could be supposed, when we talk about truth, to refer to no more than the growing content of human knowledge, most of the paradoxes of the pragmatist would turn into something very like truisms. Everybody will admit that our actual knowledge is at best extremely partial, that it is dependent on practical interests, that it is constantly in process of growth and reconstruction. We may even say that *reality* grows with human knowledge, if we will agree to mean by reality only reality *for us*,—that is, the content in terms of which our human knowledge so far apprehends the real. But this is to make truth and reality no more than alternative expressions for one

and the same thing; whereas reality may also, and commonly does, stand for a world of existences on which it is natural to say that our human thinking itself depends, and which it presupposes as its object.

Now we ordinarily find it hard to suppose that *this* world changes just because we come to know it,—that the universe with its milky ways, and subterranean fires, and its long evolutionary history, waits upon the appearance of human science before it claims the right to exist. There are various subsidiary ways indeed in which knowing changes reality. Every fact of knowing is an alteration in ourselves; it may lead to further changes in conduct, and thus indirectly modify even the object that it knows; and, as having a part in human intercourse, it perhaps may in an even more direct way influence the minds of other men. And all this is pertinent against a philosophy which denies the reality of change altogether, or the effectiveness of knowledge in bringing change about. But it does not advance a step toward refuting the common-sense belief that a world is there to be known which is not created by the knowing process; does pragmatism really have any quarrel with this claim or not?

4. Schiller's own answer is wavering and evasive. Regarded as a method simply, pragmatism has no right to raise the question even, for the suggestion that reality has no further content than that of growing knowledge is plainly trespassing already on metaphysics. Nevertheless Schiller seems to be always on the point of saying, or of wanting to say, that knowledge creates reality in *every* sense. So, for example, he denies our right to urge against the pragmatist that mere knowing does not seem capable of altering reality, on the ground that "mere" knowing is an intellectualist abstraction, cognition being incomplete until it is discharged in action; <sup>1</sup> apart from a desire to refuse to knowledge any function whatever that stops short of altering the object, the resort to such an equivocation seems

<sup>1</sup> *Studies in Humanism*, p. 440.

unnecessary and hardly comprehensible. And there is one prominent feature in particular in his theory of knowledge which suggests strongly such an animus.

This is the denial, many times repeated, that knowledge involves in any sense a "dualism," or the reference to an independent real. If knowledge literally brings into existence the ultimately real world, then the ground for this denial is apparent; but also it runs the risk of vindicating the creative function of knowledge at the expense of falling into solipsism. When pragmatism becomes logically most self-conscious, as in John Dewey, it is scrupulous not to allow for a moment the suggestion that a problem may exist about the connection of experience with reality beyond; the whole possibility is rigidly excluded from the mind, thereby at one blow ruling out a dualistic theory of knowledge, and—since the subjective, equally with the objective, is an aspect arising *within* experience—evading the charge of subjectivity and solipsism. But Schiller is less wary in his tactics; and he does not hesitate to describe knowledge in a way that identifies it with distinctively human, and even individual experience, and that renders solipsism confessedly a possible interpretation. The consequence is that while in words he more than once allows the intelligibility, and even the pragmatic value, of a belief in reality which *our* knowledge, at any rate, finds and does not create,<sup>1</sup> he continues to define knowledge itself in a way that makes the possibility of this logically very doubtful; and the result is an almost insurmountable difficulty in finding for his utterances a single consistent interpretation.

That other selves, at least, exist which are not created when we come to know them, Schiller seems to leave us in no doubt; though to say that a pragmatic reason can be given for this belief, and that other selves are postulates necessary to our social needs, does not tell us how, after pragmatically affirming such existences, we can still continue to maintain that knowl-

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 201-2.

edge creates the real world as it goes along, and carries no dualistic reference to independent being. About the world of nature, it is less easy to be sure of Schiller's attitude. Here also there is reason to suppose him ready at times to subscribe to the belief in a world evolving independently of human knowledge; but he persistently manages to keep this admission from coming face to face with the possibility, seemingly involved in it, that the immediate business of knowledge may be after all to describe reality faithfully, rather than to create it. Thus his doctrine of an original indeterminate *ύλη* as the stuff of reality, vacillates between psychology and metaphysics in a most elusive manner. As an account of the psychological growth of human life, it is intelligible to hold that we start with relatively undetermined matter of experience, the raw material of a cosmos, and gradually mold this, under the lead of practical demands, into a more and more articulate, but, for us, always unfinished and growing world, the tools that make the organization possible being themselves forged in the process. But what also we should like to know is, whether this process is the evolution of the real world itself, or whether it is the evolution of *our acquaintance with* a world which has its own independent character; and if the last, then what alternative there is to the supposition that this character of things is reproduced for us, and not created, in true knowledge. Somehow this issue seems to slip from between our fingers, and we find ourselves engaged with a quite different question—whether the outer world may not itself have grown up through a process *similar* to our knowing process.<sup>1</sup> This too is a legitimate metaphysical speculation; though in carrying us back to a limit of formless matter as the sufficient basis of the developing universe, it has a strong initial incredulity to overcome. But it is not the particular question that needs answering. If by other beings a determinate structure of reality has already been brought about, which I have now to accept as limiting my possibilities of true



belief, then the relation of *my* knowledge to this reality will involve more than Schiller's customary formula can include, and will negative the claims of knowledge to creative power in this particular respect.

5. Meanwhile it is only fair to add that, while it does not help to clear up the metaphysical issue involved, Schiller's more paradoxical claims can be discounted in a measure by remembering his main polemical interests. For it is constantly appearing that when he argues against a reality that is independent, that undergoes no change when we come to know it, and that coerces true belief, he is really thinking only of one particular conception of reality. He is protesting first of all, that is, against the notion that reality *as a whole* is static, and our knowledge a useless addition to a world already perfect. Just as the English Hegelian instinctively translates all objections to his philosophy into terms of Humian sensationalism, so the pragmatist in turn is obsessed by Hegelian absolutism, and keeps swinging back to it as if it were the only rival in the field. The typical pragmatist is given to imputing "intellectualism" to his opponent as the theologian imputes vice; and thereby no doubt he makes his polemical task much easier. But between absolutism and an empirical dualism there is absolutely no necessary connection. How, we are asked, can knowledge on the one hand adjust itself to human demands and interests, and yet on the other slavishly copy and respectfully reproduce a congenitally outer and already preceding fact? The answer, when we do not insist on setting reality as a whole over against knowledge as a whole, appears simple enough. The reality which we profess to know is not the universe at large, but a particular piece of reality. And the claim that to know this truly one must think its actual features, and is frustrated in this task if the knowing process alters it, is to leave the rest of the universe open to all the change you please, and even the particular object open to such future alteration as the truth we find out about it may enable us to effect. How indeed

should we set about actually altering the world in practice, if knowledge could not put us in touch with the real facts of the situation we want to change?

6. The uncertainties attaching to Schiller's doctrine do not on the whole seriously affect the force of his larger humanistic contentions. But one logical aspect of the matter ought not to be passed over, which does cast some doubt upon his use of pragmatism even as a method, in that it seems to minimize to an extent the necessity for a scrupulous logical conscience. The point has to do with a disposition to use the value of knowledge for forward-looking conduct to absolve us from the need of finding an answer to speculative perplexities. More especially do we find this attitude intruding in the metaphysical interpretation of the ultimate end of life, and so of reality, as a state of harmonious equipoise, in which activity has transcended time and change. That time and evolution present unsolved difficulties is not denied. But time is moving toward a future where it will pass into eternity. And when this consummation is effected, we shall no longer have any occasion to puzzle ourselves over problems that are now forever in the past; we shall have answered questions by having grown so well content as not to ask them.<sup>1</sup> It would seem a logically more reputable plan to refuse, with other pragmatists, to recognize that speculative problems have even now a standing, than, once having granted their compulsion, to recommend that an answer be found through forgetting that they ever have been asked.

## § 2. *William James*

1. The philosophical significance of William James, the second, and in the eyes of the general public the most eminent of the pragmatists, is unusually difficult to appraise with confidence. Notwithstanding the fertility with which in his later

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 198, 436.

years he threw out one brilliant suggestion after another, these are seldom of a sort to be pinned down readily to a single unambiguous meaning; while to combine them into a systematic whole of doctrine is an almost hopeless task. On the whole, it is not unlikely that the contribution on which his fame will ultimately rest may turn out to be the earlier *Psychology*; and in any case it is on flashes of psychological insight into the concrete workings of the human mind, rather than on logically reasoned solutions of historic problems, that the value of his more ambitious speculative efforts depends. Keenly aware of his own temperamental demands upon the universe, James set himself in particular to defend the rights of temperament, against the common profession on the part of the philosopher to be an impersonally accurate logical machine. This attitude was itself, he saw, one particular temperament among others—a temperament in which he did not himself find a great deal to admire. And by laying bare the meagreness of ordinary philosophical interests, and calling attention to new motives that conceivably have a right to satisfaction, James is able very frequently to approach traditional problems from a standpoint that is both novel and stimulating, even when his doctrinal outcome fails to produce conviction.

2. It is hardly necessary to dwell upon James' contributions to psychology; the most important of them have entered into current thought, on its popular as well as on its more professional side. Most pertinent to the general problems of philosophy is the voluntaristic emphasis—the insistence, that is, upon the active side of conscious process in opposition to the older disposition to resort to a mechanical association of passively received impressions; and on the central significance, therefore, of the biological organism with its equipment of specific instincts, and its relation to the larger evolutionary process. What is essentially the same thing gets expression on the inner side in the conception of a “stream of consciousness”—a continuum out of which elements are selected by

their relevancy to the needs of life, instead of being given in their isolation at the start. One particularly significant aspect of this stream James brought to general notice in his doctrine of the "fringe"—a conception which has done service in calling attention not only to the subtler facts of "meaning," of feelings of tendency and direction, which James later utilizes in his epistemology, but, less directly, to the mysterious regions of the sub-conscious, on which he likewise draws for his interpretation of religion.

3. In turning from psychology to the philosophical interests which occupied James' later life, and to which Pragmatism supplies a general title, one has to contend with the same elusiveness in the meaning of the term as in the case of Schiller. Pragmatism is identified in the first place with Peirce's principle, as James interprets it at any rate, that there is no difference which does not make a difference, and that two statements really amount to the same thing unless they lead to significant consequences that can be distinguished. So far, this is little more than a protest against unintelligent hair-splitting, and purely verbal subtleties that do not essentially further conduct; it gives a method for determining what intellectual inquiries are practically worth pursuing, and so for weeding out useless controversy, rather than a definition of what truth consists in. It is not an infallible method by any means. For almost any logical distinction it may be possible to find *some* consequence that for some mind may assume a practical value; and between values it supplies no way of choice. If however it is held modestly, it does point a useful moral against the preoccupation with trivial matters of logic out of relation to vital human interests, and inculcate a practical sense of proportion which is one ingredient in the pragmatic temper of mind. The warning becomes shortsighted if it tries to frighten men off from subjects and problems that interest them, but do not happen to interest the critic; or from problems whose relevancy to human affairs does not at once strike the eye, but has partly to be

taken on faith from their capacity to arouse this interest. Thus James' own preference for thick over thin philosophies is apt to mislead him into minimizing what is after all the useful habit of exact logical analysis, thereby affecting appreciably the value of his efforts at philosophic construction. Nevertheless in the large the pragmatic emphasis on the need of referring all intellectual adventures to a connection with human life if they are to retain their zest and their significance, seems deserving of approval.

4. Closely tied up with this is a second point—the vindication of the right to extend belief beyond definite evidence, where important issues of life are at stake. James' essay on the *Will to Believe* has become a classical document for this tendency in modern thought. The title may however help convey a wrong impression of the degree of 'James' own heterodoxy. As a matter of fact the doctrine is carefully qualified, and stands not in the least for a right to believe whatever our whim suggests. It applies only to convictions that deal with momentous issues, where intellectual reasons are insufficient to settle the matter either way, and where, again, the issue is "forced," so that to withhold decision is equally to lose the advantages that would follow, if the belief were a true one, from accepting it. It is better, that is, to risk being mistaken, than to give up the chance of truth through an exaggerated notion of the wickedness of error; in knowledge, as elsewhere, courage and the readiness to take a sporting chance are conditions of attaining the good. Meanwhile there is nothing in this to make it necessary to suppose that judgments are *constituted* true by their satisfaction of desire; indeed, the insistence that we gain the right to believe under the lead of desire only as we are ready to assume a personal risk, would have no meaning were not the facts what they are independent of the belief. There are cases, indeed, where the very acceptance of a belief may itself make the belief come true; but these are quite simple and commonplace. As a belief that something is going to hap-

pen is literally made true when the expectation is fulfilled, so a faith in the possibility of such a future fact may help to bring the fact about. But it is only to the belief in a *future* event, to what I can do or effect, that this applies in any case; and meanwhile the act always has determining conditions which stand on a wholly different footing. If I judge a chasm to be five feet wide when in reality it is ten, *this* belief does not make itself come true, nor does it increase my chance of getting across safely; and even the self-confident estimate of my powers works only within narrow limits, and may lead to rash enterprises and to consequent calamity.

5. A third significant motive, which also is involved in James' treatment of the knowledge problem, gets expression in the insistent demand for a world which leaves room for effort and experiment, for real adventure, and real danger, and real possibility of choice,—a world which does not weigh upon our spirits as an enveloping and stifling fate, but which is loosely articulated, and responsive to our endeavor to alter it. This antipathy to the block universe of monism and determinism is what lends to James' pages much of their freshness and their stimulating character, as the antithesis of that reverence for established values of which English Hegelianism is the mouth-piece; its interest in the specific and irreducible qualities of things, its conviction that evils are really evil and not to be treated gently because they are entrenched in reality or the Absolute, its respect for the individual man and his personal efforts, for experimentalism, and the right to override the impressiveness of institutions and traditions—all this represents what may fairly be called the distinctively American note in his philosophy. While, however, this suggests metaphysical novelties in plenty, in that it takes seriously time and flow, real change, real novelty, real chance within the limits of choices that concretely touch the will, it implies again no single unambiguous theory of truth. All that it calls for is a sort of universe in which evils may be got rid of, and growing ideals may

stand a chance of being realized; and for this a different account of knowledge might equally provide.

6. The prestige that comes from whatever truth may lie in the preceding considerations must then be dispensed with before we can estimate the claim of pragmatism to be regarded as a distinctive new philosophy; and it remains to ask more precisely what such a claim amounts to. There are at least three possibilities that can be dealt with more or less in separation, though in James' own treatment they are constantly mingled. One fairly intelligible meaning, to begin with, grows out of the suggestions of scientific method. A scientific theory may be regarded as a methodological device for handling more compendiously the data of experience; and so regarded, many of James' contentions will apply to it in a quite literal sense. A *theory* is indeed true only as it works, since its whole claim rests upon its capacity for working; it is shown to be valid not by its success in copying an independent reality, but by leading us to expect consequences that actually arrive, or, at the least, by bringing the facts already known into intelligible relations. We have no particular reason to imagine that there exists in nature the peculiar concatenation of abstract characters which our hypotheses represent; relationships supposedly are really there to be discovered, but they are hardly there in the form of conceptual shorthand. Scientific hypotheses are of human creation, the accumulation of man's intellectual inventions; and they are never final in the sense that their formulas are open to no further change.

But now a theory about *theories* ought not to be allowed to usurp the sole title to the name of truth without remonstrance. To know reality does not mean exclusively that we are engaged in constructing hypotheses to account for reality. Strictly it is the term *validity* that ought to be applied to the effectiveness of a hypothetical method of reaching some result, intellectual or practical, in which we take an interest. But validity itself presupposes a different sense in which we can be said to know.

It presupposes an existing situation in which there are agents, needs to be satisfied, conditions that render the satisfaction attainable, intellectual constructs intended to serve as instruments; and unless this is conceived realistically, and not itself pragmatically, the whole outlook becomes a shifting mirage, needs of conduct blend with the needs of philosophic interpretation, and language utterly refuses to stand for anything permanent enough to last even to the end of our discourse. The thinking process through which hypotheses are formed needs from start to finish to draw upon a concrete imaginative realization of things and events in their own nature; ideas as symbols or plans of action are helpless apart from ideas as the essences of real objects. If this imaginative commerce with things absent is not to be called knowledge, by what title ought it to go? In spite of all James can adduce to render plausible the claim that thought adds to reality instead of reproducing it, in the end he always comes up against facts that are recalcitrant. My thought adds to a starry constellation a name which was not there previously—this is true, but trivial. I mark out this group artificially from the rest of the firmament, and number the stars by counting them; and perhaps neither God nor man had ever made the selection or the count before. But the stars are there to be counted, as James has to confess, and the number is there to be discovered; and to say that our knowledge agrees with what already preëxisted, but does not copy it, is to make a distinction without any real difference.<sup>1</sup>

7. Meanwhile the conception of knowledge as hypothetical shorthand is used by James interchangeably with a somewhat different notion, which comes much closer to the popular understanding of pragmatism as the identification of truth with satisfying consequences. This is the notion of a "plan of action." An explanatory hypothesis may perhaps be called a plan of action in a loose and general way; but it is not what the phrase would of itself suggest to most readers. A purpose is

<sup>1</sup> *Pragmatism*, pp. 252 ff.; *Meaning of Truth*, pp. 92 ff.



indeed involved in scientific explanation—a purpose satisfied by the intellectual consequence of finding your data intelligibly accounted for in your formula; and if the doctrine of “consequences” is sufficiently covered by a definition of truth as that answer to a specific problem which the “total drift of thinking tends to confirm,” few philosophers probably would take exception to it. But this falls a good deal short of what James elsewhere leads us to expect. Indeed if he allows that the satisfaction of understanding rightly is enough to make knowledge pragmatic, no practical difference of any importance would seem to remain between pragmatism and intellectualism, since the intellectualist on his part has seldom had any objection to admitting that knowledge has also practical uses, so long as he is allowed to make knowing itself a distinctive aim; and accordingly on pragmatic principles the two philosophies would be shown to be identical. What James has seemed often to be saying is, that thought is for the sake of action *ulterior* to itself, and so that it is these further consequences that really count. Of course it may be said that pure science, as experimental, itself passes into action, in that it is constantly applying its theories to new cases. But nevertheless its interest in these is not as a means of satisfying more ultimate human purposes; it is in their power to verify the formula. The new fact is not the end at which thought aims, but only one more datum, having a peculiar strategic value, to be fitted into the hypothesis; and the distinctive satisfaction still remains the intellectual one of marrying previously known facts with further facts. It is possible that pragmatism might be interpreted to mean no more than this, and that when we say that truth consists in consequences, we are merely intending to maintain that an hypothesis is not justified in stopping with its own first formulation, however well this may seem to explain the data so far known, but should be applied in a way to show that it is capable of covering as many new facts as we are able by active experiment to uncover. But here there is no distinctive

theory of knowledge involved, since everyone worth convincing is already convinced in the abstract that no hypothesis can be accepted as true unless it can hold out against any further facts that later on turn up.

It seems difficult not to suppose, then, that there is one strain in James' account of truth which tends to identify it with practical as *distinct* from speculative satisfaction; a thing is true so long as it is profitable to us, or affords us emotional gratification. Of course James cannot be supposed to have any real notion of maintaining that we are to believe anything we choose to believe because it would be pleasant to do so. For the most part it is not the good of believing, but the good of *acting* on belief, to which his theory points us; and if we were to insist that all beliefs be acted on fully and consistently, and that *all* the consequences be taken into account, the practical danger from rash belief would be negligible. Only such beliefs as cannot be tested directly by consequences in the natural world would be left to the test merely of emotional satisfaction; and the right to extend belief here James has already and less paradoxically defended. Nevertheless his *words* do sometimes seem to say that *any* degree of satisfactoriness aimed at and secured constitutes a belief true. Thus in a well-known passage where he concedes even to the Absolute a certain significance, as furnishing the occasion for a moral holiday, this conception of the Absolute he calls in so far *true*, even while he adds that he himself prefers not to accept this truth because for him it comes into conflict with other truths. The greatest enemy of any one of our truths may be the rest of our truths, he goes on to say, in answer to the charge that pragmatism gives us the right to believe whatever we please.<sup>1</sup> The ordinary man would find no difficulty in admitting that, for particular purposes, a belief which it is our duty to reject might be more or less useful, or satisfying; but when this is called a true belief, he is apt to feel that liberties

<sup>1</sup> *Pragmatism*, p. 78.

are being taken with his parts of speech. What James probably has in mind is not a true belief, but a belief *that* something is true; and that there is a close connection between satisfaction and *belief* will no doubt be found in some significant sense to be the case.

8. The third interpretation which James gives to the pragmatic conception of knowledge is altogether the most clear-cut and distinctive one. It is his own special contribution to the problem; and though it connects only somewhat loosely with the preceding considerations, it has a highly important bearing on other and more metaphysical doctrines with which his interest became increasingly identified. The theory, briefly stated, is as follows: Knowledge is a function of experience, a particular sort of relation between its terms. When I say that I know an object, what I really mean is that some present fact of experience has the power, by a series of continuous transitions, to lead me to the actual presence of the object—to the perceptual experience, namely, which *is* the object's presence. Knowledge is thus an affair wholly of transitions and leadings within experience. And whenever any idea thus leads to an end term which is found to be satisfying, in that it carries the sense of being the goal toward which the process has been aiming, it thereby becomes *true*. Truth is successful functioning or pointing in this particular form; by the very fact of a satisfactory completion, the starting point becomes a knower, the terminus an object known. The idea may be a copy of its object, or the two may have practically nothing in common; the point is immaterial so long as the trail leads us to our destination.

The chief plausibility of the transition-feeling theory of knowledge lies in the fact that it offers a concrete analysis of the act of "pointing," or "referring" to an object. A mere image has, as we look at it, no discoverable self-transcendence or inner duplicity; it is simply what it is. And yet in knowledge the idea does evidently somehow connect with what lies

beyond its own boundaries. Three alternatives are open. We may leave the fact a sheer mystery; or we may appeal to some outside agent, like Royce's Absolute, to do the connecting; or, with James, we may add to the existence of the image a further "function." And how, James asks, can such a function be conceived, if not as a power of leading, of getting us to the object of our cognitive interest? And if knowledge is thus only a function, then truth must be definable in terms of successful functioning, and consequences, in the form of a satisfactory issue, will constitute its essential nature.

9. The first comment that seems called for here has to do with a point already dwelt upon in other connections. James' description simply does not cover certain things which the term knowledge has always been understood to imply. There is indeed one harmless meaning which there is no occasion to dispute. It is only at the termination of the process of verification, James remarks, that we know *for certain*; and if we mean by truth only what is known of a certainty to be true, no empiricist at least need hesitate to identify this with truth that has been verified. But it still remains open to question whether the verifying process *constitutes* the claim to be true, or only substantiates it. When we speak of verifying truth, we surely do not mean to speak of verifying our verification. James' speech is all the time betraying him; thus when he remarks that the pragmatist cannot warrant the judgment that his own theory is true *really*, but can only believe it,<sup>1</sup> clearly the belief attaches to something other than the warrant he confesses he cannot obtain.

And what this something is, is reasonably simple; it is not that a certain consequence is going to happen, but that a certain situation has as a matter of fact a specific nature characterized by specific qualities and relations. And the verification, if it comes, is simply a way of making me feel certain that I was right in affirming this character. The realities, to

<sup>1</sup> *Meaning of Truth*, p 213.

quote James himself again, are believed only because their notions appear true, and their notions appear true only because they work satisfactorily; this does not mean that the notions appear to work satisfactorily because they work satisfactorily. And indeed if it were not for the confusion which his own conflicting utterances introduce, it would not be necessary to labor the matter, since on occasion James concedes all that there is any need to claim. That truth is predetermined by the event's nature, that the existence of the object is the only reason in innumerable cases why the idea does work successfully, that an enormous quantity of truth may be written down as having preëxisted to its perception by us humans, that if an hypothesis is satisfactory we must believe it to have been true anteriorly to its formulation by ourselves<sup>1</sup>—all this is far more easily intelligible on the supposition that truth is an affirmation of character, than on the supposition that it is a process of verification.

10. If now we are prepared to take these last expressions seriously, a perplexity confronts James' doctrine. If knowledge makes a genuine claim to reach out beyond the limits of the knowing experience, and to grasp by anticipation the true nature of reality not present,—not merely future experiences that are going to connect on to my present one through a series of felt transitions, but, conceivably, any sort of reality anywhere in the universe,—is the machinery for this provided in his description of the knowing process? On the surface this description, if taken without qualification, limits knowledge to the series of transitive facts that constitute some specific knowing experience, and to the sort of unity we commonly call psychological; and in that case it becomes incumbent to explain how it escapes the traditional difficulties of subjectivism.

As a preliminary to answering this question, it is necessary to say a word first about the wider metaphysical setting in which James' theory of knowing is intended to play a part.

<sup>1</sup> *Radical Empiricism*, pp 252, 254. *Meaning of Truth*, p. xv.

The doctrine of radical empiricism, to an interest in which James came to subordinate even pragmatism, has indeed, as will be noticed presently, pragmatic consequences, especially in the field of religion; but in itself it is a metaphysical doctrine quite as technical as most metaphysics, and as far removed from immediate ends of human living. It stands in the first place for the belief that "experience" is a self-sustaining reality leaning on nothing more ultimate for its support. It is made up of no one peculiar stuff, psychical or otherwise, but of as many kinds of stuff as the world actually presents, each precisely what it is *experienced as*; each bit joins on to its nearest neighbor, and through the whole run innumerable threads of relationship. But the continuities, too, are to be taken for just what we find them to be, and nothing more; and no particular kind of unity is absolute and all-embracing. The bearings of this are best understood in terms of alternative doctrines which it denies. Thus the needlessness of appealing to anything extraneous to hold experience together, is a repudiation on the one hand of the "soul" of everyday belief,—for which James' early physiological training seems to have given him a special antipathy,—and, on the other, of the eternal relating principle to which the absolutists appealed. Meanwhile the term "radical" is meant to correct the error into which earlier empiricists had fallen, in reducing experience to its substantive or sensational features alone, and failing to see that the connective tissue of experience, its transitions and relations, are equally real as immediate facts of feeling.

II. Into this field of pure experience knowledge, in terms of the feelings of transition whose absence had been responsible for the atomic sensationalism of the older psychology, enters to assume the rôle of the unifying agents that have been deposed—the soul, the transcendental ego, and, as a final sublimation, consciousness. At least James assigns it this rôle. But a closer scrutiny reveals certain obscurities in his position. Even as a substitute for the soul or self, knowledge fails

to serve entirely the purpose for which the self traditionally had been invoked; and it seems to serve this purpose only because James throws together two quite distinct questions. How can one thing know another?—this is the proper question of knowledge. But in resorting to knowledge in order to replace the self, this turns insensibly into the very different question, How can the various elements of experience be united to form a conscious unity? The confusion is encouraged by James' disposition to use the terms knowledge and consciousness as synonymous. Now all the elements in the experience of a self may intelligibly be held to be co-conscious; but not all these elements belong to the series of felt transitions to which knowing has been reduced. To say nothing of the feelings and emotions, there are sensations and images also that stand apart from the conscious sense of meaning and direction; they are irrelevant to our central purposes, and drift languidly at the edge of the current, as in the case of many of our fancies, or are submerged in the obscurity of the "fringe." Knowledge at best, therefore, only very partially explains the unity of a self. James has, it is true, another theory to fall back on here, a theory dating back to the days of the *Psychology*, but utilized off and on in his later writings also. For this, each passing thought or pulse of experience is a knower which turns past pulses into the content of a single unitary stream, by appropriating them, and then passing on its inheritance to the next succeeding thought. But the situation is not bettered by having two alternative explanations of doubtful consistency with one another; for the knower conceived as a memory act through which the present experience attaches to its train past experiences that can never be recalled,—granting that this is an account of knowledge at all,—is clearly different from a knower constituted such by the ability to lead through a series of real transitions to a future state destined to be also real.

12. The transition theory of knowledge is, accordingly, incompetent to take the place of "consciousness" as an explana-

tion of the psychological unity of experience, since it covers only a portion of this experience content. And when we turn to knowledge in its proper sense, as transcending in range of content such a psychological whole, the difficulties are multiplied. The world of pure experience is, it has appeared, a world of empirical natures, each precisely what it is experienced as, and having innumerable lines of connection. Now these relationships within pure experience are only to a very minor degree identical with the serial transitions that constitute knowing. Any particular bit of experience may become known by being made the terminus of a knowing process; but it has at the same time many other relationships that are not cognitive. This indeed supplies the basis of one of the chief merits that James attributes to his theory; it is devised not only to get rid of a unifying self, or substratum, or agent, but also of that dualism between perception and physical object which has vexed philosophers. For the perceptual experience *is* the object in a particular context; the percept of a tree, and the physical tree, are one and the same bit of pure experience taken twice over, once in connection with a series of changes that belong to my personal life history, once in connection with persisting or continuous experience that makes up the growth of the tree as a natural object, and its contemporaneous spatial and causal relationships with the environment.

Radical empiricism takes for granted, then, the entire world that constitutes the stock in trade of human intercourse, not the world of psychological connections merely. But while we may have the right thus to postulate the real world, without waiting to deduce it from a theory about the possibilities of knowledge, at least one is called upon to show that he is assuming nothing which his theory of knowledge will not allow him to believe in when this too comes to be added to his system. And whether 'James' theory can meet this test successfully is very much open to doubt. Percept and object, we have been told, are the same identical fact in different con-



texts. But knowledge is defined as belonging only to one of these contexts, the psychological one; how then can we "know" the other? The tree in its physical context involves elements of pure experience in which our present knowing thought does *not* terminate. They *are*, but they are not experienced in the way of knowing; how accordingly do we get the right to speak of them? It is only within the range of *our* experience that, for us, felt transitions occur; anything that is not an actual object of perception is literally separated by a gap, with all transitive intermediaries lacking. James' own answer to the objection misses its point completely. The answer is, that while it is true that in many cases our thought does not actually terminate in its object, it does terminate in something in the *neighborhood* of its object—its associates, or its results, or its causes; and since in this way we are enabled to control the object, the pragmatic consequences are the same as if we were dealing with it directly. Now it is quite true that nothing has reality for our knowledge apart from some point of attachment which it gets to objects of immediate sense experience; a past event in history, for example, must have had effects embodied in some actual present form of existence, to allow it to be brought in contact with us at all. And these nearer associates may often serve our practical purposes sufficiently. But the question is not how, presupposing a competence to refer in thought to objects which "experience" does not reach, we are able to think of certain objects rather than of others, but how this presupposed recognition of a transcendent object is possible at all *if* knowing is nothing but a series of experienced transitions that have reached their goal. James imports his own knowledge of the situation into the mind of the knower himself, when the whole point of the criticism is that on his own showing there is no way for it to get there. At best all that James' theory provides for is a feeling of incompleteness in the cognitive series, as if something more were needed to round it out; and such a blind and inarticulate sense

of groping, of which the hunting for a lost name might serve as an example, has little in common with the experience of meaning in thought a definite object, recognized in terms of its specific nature. It is hard to avoid the suspicion that 'James at times is even resorting to a purely verbal trick, and that when he talks of the "discontinuity" experience which I cannot avoid having when I try to make the transition, say, from my experience to yours, and fail in the attempt, this feeling of a gap is itself taken as a felt transition which serves to bridge the gap.<sup>1</sup> But of course it does nothing of the sort. If I can be said to have a feeling of unlikeness, or of discontinuity, in passing from a direct acquaintance with my own life to the less vivid thought of another man's inner self, such an experienced relation holds only between my experience and this *thought*; that of which I think still remains a thing outside any unity of immediate experience for me.

As a matter of fact James' case is still worse than the preceding criticism has implied; it is not even clear how it can account for knowledge where the felt transitions are completed. Strictly, if we follow James' account, we have no right to talk of knowing an object until the object is there bodily in experience; but then the earlier stage will no longer be present to constitute it known, and it will be no more than itself existing as a bit of pure experience. At best,—unless, as indeed James seems at times actually to imply, knowing be regarded as not in itself an experiencing at all, but only the impersonal *fact* that some later experience is on the way,<sup>2</sup>—the knower can only be the pure experience just preceding, and the experience can only know its *immediate* successor; but this is wholly out of relation to what concretely we mean by knowledge. It is absurd to say that I do not know—cannot think of truly—a future event, but only know the first step necessary to lead me to that event, which first step then knows the second, and

<sup>1</sup> *Radical Empiricism*, p. 49.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57.

so on. It is possible however to see why the absurdity fails to strike James, if we turn back to the confusion of problems already noted. For if we are trying to explain, not how one thing can know another, but how it can be joined to another in an experienced unity, then of course it *is* only two immediately contiguous elements that thus flow together.

13. It remains to notice briefly the pragmatic consequences which specially recommend radical empiricism to James' mind. And here things take a rather curious turn. The ultimate motive to which James confesses for his final philosophic preferences is the religious one; epistemological dualism, and theism, and souls, separate us from God, and thwart the craving for immediate union and identity with the divine. The fact is curious because it is clearly on the road to that ideal of unity toward which, as a critic of absolutism, James had seemed to show dislike rather than sympathy. This reversal of attitude has two main aspects. The first is speculative, and centers about the notion of the "compounding" of consciousness. A logical difficulty here had always troubled James, and in the *Psychology* had led him to repudiate entirely the belief that separate mental states can be brought together into a unity. Nor, he frankly admits, has his difficulty been resolved; and if he now feels justified in disregarding it, and following the religious instinct, it is simply that he has taken heart from Bergson, and is prepared to abandon logic. To estimate fairly this apparently desperate course would need a detailed study; probably it is not as bad as it sounds. James' explanation of his meaning seems to reduce it to a denial of the possibility of manipulating the abstract concepts of the one and the many so as to restore their fluidity, and generate out of them the reality of a many-in-oneness. We cannot explain conceptually *how* the many can be one, but can only dip back into the flow of immediate experience itself, and find that the fact is so;

and in repudiating logic, we are simply giving up the attempt of philosophers to construct reality out of static concepts.<sup>1</sup>

But here, as frequently, James fails to distinguish two very different things. As his discussion proceeds, it is apparent that what for the most part he is thinking of is the standing of that sort of unity which each man knows as a fact in his own conscious experience. Even here an ambiguity is present. The inclusiveness of my conscious life, whether in terms of what is there at a given moment, or of the union of successive moments, does not need to imply "compounding," as if things previously existing in separation were brought together; the facts would equally be satisfied by supposing that outside this growing and expanding unity the experiences do not exist at all, though other experiences more or less similar to them may. James' new doctrine seems to imply that each addition to my unified life was already waiting outside the door for a chance to enter, like a persisting physical element which forms fresh combinations with other elements; and this there is nothing in the situation to render necessary, or even plausible. But in any case the acceptance of a continuity of consciousness does not remove the most serious objection to a unity of God and man; much more important logically is the difficulty of understanding how, if my life is a part of God's life, it can, not at some previous moment before it has been appropriated, but at the same identical moment, be one thing for me, and quite another for him. This is not, as James seems to suppose, a difficulty raised by a conceptual logic, through its insistence that a term cannot be in two different relations without becoming intrinsically a different term—a difficulty capable of being settled by an appeal to fact. On the contrary, it is itself based on a matter of fact—that certain specifiable aspects of experience are actually incompatible with a more inclusive unity of conscious-

<sup>1</sup> *Pluralistic Universe*, pp. 281, 287; *Some Problems of Philosophy*, pp. 81, 97.

ness; ignorance, for example, cannot enter into the wider context of knowledge, and still remain itself.

14. More interesting however than this logical question, is the change in spirit which James' new position involves, and the disappearance of that insistent demand for novelty, for freedom, for pluralistic independence, of which he had made himself the spokesman. For such a recompounding of existing bits of flat experience is as stale and unprofitable as the recombining of atoms, though the patterns may be more variegated. And say what we will, to begin to make terms with a panpsychist philosophy like that of Fechner, is to move inevitably in the direction of binding all the things that really count for us together in the unity of a single whole. If there is a great reservoir in which the memories of earth's inhabitants are pooled and preserved; if consciousness preëxists already behind the scenes coeval with the world, and is not generated *de novo* in a vast number of places; if it is only the phenomenal interposition of a brain or nervous system that gives to experience its various special forms, and separates it into parts; if I in my apparent individuality am only a marginal content of a greater self, my energies the overflow from its superfluity, and my new experiences a shifting of the threshold; if the ideal of truth, of satisfying knowledge, is a total conflux of mind with reality,<sup>1</sup>—how are we any more virtuous than the idealist and the absolutist? James continues to insist that the day is saved so long as the unity is not *all*-inclusive, and some portions of experience are left outside God's life.<sup>2</sup> And this does preserve one speculative advantage; if God is not literally the whole, he has a chance to escape responsibility for evil. But at best, in falling back on this, all the pragmatic motives are transferred to an Olympian world. It is for the life of God, or of the Gods, that freedom, and pluralism, and a loose universe are saved;

<sup>1</sup> *Pluralistic Universe*, pp 290, 299; *Human Immortality*, pp 23, 27, 51-2

<sup>2</sup> *Pluralistic Universe*, pp 125, 294, 312.

meanwhile our human world falls wholly within the embrace of a wider spirit, even though not an infinite one. In thus consenting to sacrifice the autonomy and independence and creativeness of man to the craving for a mystical and religious union with the divine, James comes so close after all to the absolutism of Royce, that it is hard to detect differences of pragmatic importance.

### § 3. *John Dewey*

1. In turning to John Dewey, the third of the leading exponents of pragmatism, the puzzling mixture of motives which has so far complicated the task of exposition is no longer conspicuously in evidence. The difficulties here lie rather in certain subtleties in the attitude itself. As in the case of Idealism, though along very different lines, the strategy of Dewey's campaign lies in a flanking movement, which aims not so much to solve traditional problems as to render them meaningless, and undeserving of serious attention. And first accordingly it will be useful to indicate again the standpoint that will be presupposed as a background in the account which follows, especially since this does not receive a very sympathetic treatment at Dewey's hands.

There are three easily distinguishable problems that might be set for the philosopher by different aspects of the knowledge situation, if we take the familiar starting point of everyday belief. This without any question holds that knowledge is an act performed by some particular human individual, in his endeavor to make himself acquainted with a surrounding world with which it is to his interest to come to terms. The enterprise he carries on through the medium of his own perceptions and thoughts and ideas,—his own in some sense, in spite of the undoubted fact that *what* he is perceiving or thinking about is reality itself, and not his private thoughts or sensations. Now the problem of epistemology in the narrowest sense has to do

simply with the implications of this apparent fact that the knowing thought and the object known are not one thing but two, that knowing is always man's knowing, and that man himself is very obviously only a minor part of the real world that forms the object of knowledge.

With the dualism that on the surface seems to be involved here, modern philosophy has wrestled long and impatiently. In the determination not to accept it as it stands, it first experimented in every possible direction with an idealistic solution, which aimed to overcome the dualism by denying reality to an independent object. And accordingly in absolute idealism, where the aim was most successfully carried out, the epistemological problem takes on an entirely new meaning, by connecting itself with a different, though equally real, aspect of the knowledge situation. Here knowledge is interpreted, namely, in terms wholly of the relational or descriptive *content* in which for purposes of thought the "character" of true reality is found. The idealists never quite succeeded in putting wholly out of sight the fact that this is a content judged to be the character of reality by a human knower; but by throwing all the weight of eulogistic emphasis on the eternal nature of the *what* of knowledge, and by making much of the merely temporal and empirical and imperfect character of the finite knower and his knowing act, they manage to leave the impression that this last is too insignificant to be allowed to divert us from the grander spectacle of an absolute and timeless whole of truth. However, this is an evasion, which still leaves the problem of the individual knower in the background. In Dewey, a further step is taken in the form of an explicit and logically defended denial that experience attaches to an experienter, or knower, in *any* sense; and he does this by limiting his account of knowledge to still a third aspect, distinguishable alike from the act of external reference, and from the *explication* of logical content.

2. This aspect is the *active process of thinking*, or judging.

Dewey sets out to show, in opposition primarily to the idealist's preoccupation with a finished logical system, that knowledge as logical content is subordinate to knowledge as a functional part of experience. We think not for the sake of thinking, but as a stage in the business of living. Reason is not something handed down from above to constitute experience rational; it is something that *happens* to experience under certain definable conditions. So long as life moves smoothly, we do not think—we act. It is only when the impulses that normally lead to action conflict with one another, and the issue becomes confused and doubtful, that we have to call a halt to the immediate business of living and enjoying, and turn our attention rather to the means of reconstructing our interrupted activity. This last is what constitutes the special phase of experience which we call thinking, and with which the term knowledge is now *exclusively* to be identified. In such a mediating process, a diremption of experience for the first time comes about. On the one hand there emerges the "fact," the object, the datum, —those elements of the situation, namely, the outcome of past experience crystallized in habit, which, while they are not final, else the need for reconstruction would not have arisen, are yet sufficiently stable for us to count upon them for the moment, and look to them to furnish the material out of which the new and desired method of control can be constructed. And on the other hand there is the concept or idea, which, on the basis of the given, attempts, in the form of an hypothesis or plan of action, to effect this reconstruction. And the validity or truth of the idea is reducible therefore to its success or failure in the task; "that which guides us truly, is true."

The articulated logical content of science which idealism had exalted as the supreme end of knowledge, is, accordingly, nothing final; it stands only for the advisability of providing instruments for the control of conduct before the immediate need actually arises. The business of science is to analyze the given, with the intent of discovering cues to action more de-



pendable than those which a crude unanalyzed experience can supply. It is most useful that this specialized business should be turned over to the professional thinker, who thus may appear to be interested in thought for its own sake. But the justification for his work is nevertheless always the service to which it can be put for the needs of conduct in the concrete; and what he discovers is not final "truth," but simply a set of tools that have to be applied to this or that particular situation before anything deserving to be called truth arises. For the true object of the judgment is always, in the end, a practical issue, relating to what we are called upon to do, knowing has reference only to the future, and is neither a contemplative survey of existence, nor the working out of a timeless dialectical process.

And here comes in the fundamental motive of Dewey's whole philosophy; it is an attempt to furnish a sound logical basis for progress—progress in the individual, but still more in the social world. Pragmatism is an experimental use of intelligence to liberate and liberalize action. It looks to a growing rather than a static world; thinking is not the reduplication of reality already complete, but the actual method of social advance, a method that is to free us alike from the unchanging ideals of obscurantism, and from the spasmodic demand for novelty or freedom working under no principle of control from the past. It is the logic of rational evolution, where, along with a constant alertness to the novelties in the situation, and an absence of undue subservience to the past, the new is at the same time connected with the old in an orderly and sober fashion.

3. If it is really so that the object of thought is always an end of action, or an ideal, there is plausibility in the claim that it is progressively constructed by the thinking process, instead of being present all along as a ready-made standard by which thought constructs are externally measured. Here is precisely the quarrel between the conservative and the liberal or radical temper. Liberalism, if it is to be effective, is com-

mitted to the logic of a social end which is not a blanket concept unambiguously given once for all, and calling upon us merely to square each new act with it conscientiously; this is, with the best of intentions, to play into the hands of the opponents of change. The ideal literally grows out of experience itself; and not out of experience in general, but of particular experiential situations where alone it gets specific content, and where its relevancy is open to test. As against that conception of the practical judgment for which the particular case is only a misrepresentation of the totality of truth, and the concrete act of thinking a logical irrelevance, this has much to say for itself. But it has no force against a common-sense realism and personalism which entertains no prejudice against change. Dewey himself came to pragmatism by way of English Hegelianism, and he inherited its lack of concern for the connection of knowledge with a human knower; and accordingly in repudiating the intellectualism of the idealists, it apparently did not occur to him to reconsider their attitude here as well. Instead, his absorption in the process of "thinking" strengthens his antipathy to the problem of epistemology as a human reference of thought to reality as such; the relation of thought to reality by definition turns for him into a quite different relation—that of thinking to a particular situation.

Nevertheless the fact remains that there at least is nothing in the motive of liberalism to justify this antipathy. A common-sense dualism of thoughts and things has no need to deny that *ideals* are constructed by thinking rather than given ready-made, or that the ultimate purpose of thinking lies in its relation to values. Its own special problem does not compete with this at all. Why should not ideals be realized, as they seem to be, by human individuals within a world of determinate, yet more or less plastic reality? or why should the recognition of this be incompatible with a constant growth in the ends to the realizing of which a knowledge of the conditions of attainment is ulti-

mately to be put? This recognition does not tell us anything in detail about the process of thinking, any more than about the logical content of the ideas through which reality is described. It is a presupposition which tacitly underlies these—the presupposition that our thinking and our thoughts are concerned with independent reals, and are not mere psychology, or mere logic. But because it is a different problem, it does not follow that it is an unimportant one in its place. Meanwhile the present point is, that if an interest in plastic social ideals is to constitute our fundamental motive, there is in so far pragmatically no reason to set up pragmatism as a distinctive metaphysics, in opposition to the realistic and dualistic beliefs of common sense.

And indeed there is a pragmatic reason against it, since it leads inevitably to argumentative subtleties that detract so much from the force of the practical appeal to general belief. For it cannot be denied that in the interest of making *all* judgments practical, and *all* objects of knowledge ideals, Dewey has created a highly speculative philosophy, whose practical value seems at best only the negative one of clearing away supposed mental obstacles to change and reconstruction; and since its own metaphysical peculiarities are far more obscure and doubt-provoking than the practical attitude for which they are intended to supply a foundation, they are liable to weaken, rather than increase, the possible influence for good which philosophy may exert. It is not obvious how the turning of philosophy from the work of interpreting reality—a fluid reality, it may well turn out to be—into a “method” merely, has supplied us with any practical tool for the rectifying of specific social ills—the task to which it appears that philosophy is for the future to confine itself; Dewey’s analysis is perfectly general, and leaves concrete questions, as before, to the familiar methods of common sense and good judgment, enlightened by expert knowledge. One may be justified in centering his own attention upon the logic of conduct, or of ethics. But he is going

out of his way to make unnecessary trouble when he insists that the ethical problem is for man the only legitimate one, and that it supplants the need for paying any attention to questions about the nature of the real world in which the ethical situation arises, or about the way in which we are able to know this world. Ethical edification, no more than religious edification, can safely precede an impartial scrutiny of fact.

4. What then, more precisely, is the nature of Dewey's pragmatism, considered as a distinctive philosophy, and what are the reasons for questioning its claims? We may start by putting ourselves at the point of view of an outside observer, in the presence of a fact of conduct. There is here a perfectly objective situation, focussing in a human organism that reacts to express its various needs and impulses. In such an organism there are some reactions which are habitual or automatic, while others, again, we should characterize as intelligent; and these last we should probably on examination connect in some fashion with a capacity for making adjustments to novel features in the situation, adjustments not provided for by familiar ways of response. Accordingly the locus of intelligence may plausibly be looked for in connection with the process whereby, in terms of a future and as yet unrealized end, organic habits are reconstructed to meet conditions which otherwise would bring the life activity to a halt.

So far we have been taking over without question the plain man's assurance of the familiar facts he finds about him; we have viewed the matter from the standpoint of an observer, assumed to be competent to know what is going on in the world. All that such an observer can behold is *behavior*, in a definite and literal sense—bodies changing their spatial position in certain discoverable ways with reference to other bodies; no question has so far arisen of any kind of fact other than the physical, which includes of course a physical nervous system<sup>\*</sup> inside the surface of the body. For many purposes this is a defensible attitude. Science certainly has the undoubted right

to assume without question that there are things to be examined, and that these things are capable of being known. But philosophy can hardly afford to be equally complaisant. Two features in particular complicate the situation for the philosopher. When the scientist examines physical behavior he does not, or he need not, commit himself to any opinion about other things that claim also to be real. But a philosopher is concerned with the whole of reality. He cannot therefore take behavior as his sole field of inquiry, without dogmatically excluding as illusions the other things that people have called non-physical; and this will need something more than a philosopher's assertion to make it stick. Further, the scientist has a right to forget, when he is dealing with his objects, that there is an outside observer—the scientist himself—by whom the world of objects is known; this, as a constant factor in the situation, is of interest to him only as it appears to be introducing perturbations into his methods of observation. Nevertheless the observer and his knowledge are actually a part of the total world; and for the philosopher, who deals with the situation as a whole, it may become important to inquire what this possibility of knowing implies. Knowledge that confessedly is *for an observer*, and so to this extent other than the objects of knowledge, cannot afford too hastily to shake itself free from the epistemological problem.

In so far, then, as Dewey presupposes this first account of the matter, he is able to forego for philosophy a preliminary theory of reality only by assuming dogmatically a certain character as belonging to reality to start with, and refusing to submit it to argument. It may however be asked to what extent he really does take such a starting point; and to this the answer will have to be more or less hesitating. There seems no reason to doubt that his words sometimes bear precisely this construction. The subject of experience is identified with an animal organism, whose brain is expressly called an organ of a certain kind of behavior, *not* of knowing the world. Ex-

perience is defined as just certain modes of the interaction of natural objects, of which the physical body happens to be one; it is a matter of sensori-motor coördinations, of functions and habits, of active adjustments and readjustments, of coördinations and activities rather than of states of consciousness. Subjective and private things are merely events in the nervous system; operations of knowing are natural responses of the organism; intellectual analysis is ultimately physical and active; inference is a particular form of behaving to a given situation.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, this is not the *only* account of the matter which he gives. And because it is not the only account, it becomes particularly important to determine whether the two rival descriptions are essentially, or only verbally discrepant, since unless we are dealing with a doctrine that is unambiguous, we can never be certain of our ground. There is reason for believing that Dewey's doctrine is not unambiguous, and that the discrepancy is sometimes made use of for evading difficulties.

5. To justify this claim, it will be useful first to restate the account of experience in a way to bring out more clearly its peculiarities, in their opposition now to common-sense belief. For our ordinary prejudices, nature is one thing, man's inner life of conscious experiencing another; and it is precisely the purpose of knowing, as one aspect of the conscious life, to overcome ideally the separation, so that natural difficulties in the way of satisfying action may be anticipated and provided for. Dewey however, in refusing to attach experience to an individual, rejects this dualistic interpretation of the physical and the psychical; and accordingly he is compelled to retranslate the situation into terms that fall in rather less naturally with our familiar modes of expression. The sole reality is now a group of "things," perfectly physical and objective, conceived

<sup>1</sup> *Creative Intelligence*, pp. 36, 37; *Influence of Darwin*, pp. 155, 157; *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, p. 91; *Essays in Experimental Logic*, pp. 228, 332, 425.

as belonging to a "situation" that calls for reconstruction. Knowledge is not "our" knowledge *of* things; in the knowledge process, the very things themselves which are present in a non-cognitive and non-psychical way in perception, undergo change, and become psychical. They do this by serving as signs of future possibilities of experience, clues to the sort of action needed to carry life forward; a "thing" acting as a clue is all that we mean by the psychical. The whole process is thus a continuous transformation of reality, in which we literally *make* the idea true by modifying it—or the thing—till it is successful in meeting our needs. "Our" needs, it is natural to say again; though in strictness, the needs of the "situation" would be more exact. For experience here is not, once more, the experience of an individual, of you or me. Experience as such does not belong to individuals, but individuals belong to experience; a self, that is, like everything else, is what it is *experienced as*, and consequently there is no self until the recognition of a self arises—under definable conditions—in the experience process.

6. Now to what extent does this new reading of the situation in which knowledge plays a part, coincide with reality regarded from the standpoint of the scientific observer as a biological fact? It seems evident at once that the two can be made to agree, if at all, only by a forced interpretation. In each, to be sure, we succeed verbally in keeping within the limits of a "natural" process in terms of "things"; but while the first formulation does this in a perfectly unambiguous and familiar way, the second introduces large complications. What the observer sees is a series of physical changes which in the nervous system—in a manner not yet fully understood, but supposedly with no break in continuity—effects a harmony of the organism and its activities with the environment. But these nervous processes are not in any natural sense the "things" of the common world, taking on new and mental functions. External energies indeed coöperate with organic energies in producing neural effects that involve a transformation of their

causes. But there is nothing whatever in this to suggest to the scientist Dewey's description of "experience"; the whole account in terms of experienced content, except as the scientist's own perceptual experience is involved, is for him mythological.

And equally on the side of the "situation" out of which knowing experiences arise, Dewey's new description quite fails to fit the scientific account of a physical universe in which organisms originate, and to which they react. The world of "experience" is a very different world from this. It is vaguely bounded, confined within comparatively narrow limits, incomplete in detail, represented equally in the most precise experience of the scientist, and in the befogged and confused world of him who rises quickly from sleep in a pitch-dark room; "this vagueness, this doubtfulness, this confusion, is the thing experienced, and, *qua* real, is as 'good' a reality as the self-luminous vision of an Absolute." "Another trait of every *res* is that it has focus and context: brilliancy and obscurity, conspicuousness or apparency, and concealment or reserve, with a constant movement of redistribution."<sup>1</sup> All this is irrelevant to the world of science; to the *observer* of organic action, every physical process involved is on a level as regards definiteness with every other, and the focus—a term evidently taken over from James' account of the "psychological" stream—is at best only a very misleading figure of speech.

It is not until we discard scientific biology altogether, that Dewey's second and most distinctive account of the situation begins to take on meaning. When I turn back and scrutinize a past experience of my own in terms simply of what it was *experienced as* from within, then indeed I find something that is very skilfully described in Dewey's analysis. I first catch myself, we will say, engaged in action, denuded so far as possible of introspective interest, or of the need for reconstructive thought; this I can describe as a sense of enjoyable activity, going on in what is a part of the experience that I should

<sup>1</sup>*Influence of Darwin*, p. 236; *Essays in Experimental Logic*, p. 6.



recognize as a world of things and persons. These "things," however, are no longer the enduring and scientifically characterized physical objects of the external observer's world. Only a few of the characters that really belong to them in this latter world are at the moment present in experience; they come and go with the needs of my particular interest; they have continually shifting outlines that shade off into a dim and confused background; in short they are, as we naturally tend to say, not things in their own existence, but things *as I experience or take cognizance of them* in some limited human situation. Suppose now I meet an obstacle. The same things that previously I was perceiving and reacting to automatically, I now subject to closer intellectual scrutiny and analysis; they may intelligibly be said, as experiences, to turn from perceptual objects into objects of thought. But such an abstract and conceptualizing thought, again, still leaves the *observer's* objects unchanged; these do not lose any of their qualities, or gain any; because of the shifting play of my intellectual attention under the stress of particular needs.

7. 'Just here is the crucial point which will determine whether or not one is to be able to call himself a pragmatist in Dewey's sense. Everything that has just been said conveys the implication that I can call this situation "experience" simply because it is *my* experience—because the situation focusses about my interests and my organism, and objects play their part as ministering to these. True, it does not lend itself to description merely in subjective terms. But because in experience there is inherent the cognitive *recognition* of a real world, we have no right to assume that reality itself is reducible just to immediately experienced content. Logically, Dewey's whole position rests on the dictum that perceptions are not cases of knowledge; and this itself is not proven by experience. We *seem* in perception, on the contrary, to find ourselves in contact with what transcends any immediately experienced fact. And in the end the sole reason offered for re-

fusing to accept this claim, is that knowledge cannot have an experience-transcending function *because* knowing is nothing but thinking, inquiring, solving problems. Dewey *defines* knowledge as thinking, and thinking in terms of practical ends; and then when some aspect of human belief fails to fit this definition, the belief, and not the definition, is tacitly assumed to be at fault. The only way to meet this is, accordingly, to reverse the method, and to insist that definitions should be broad enough to cover our natural interpretation of the facts.

8. The first and least disputable charge, from such a standpoint, to be brought against the identification of reality with experience, is that in any case it leaves no meaning to our natural conviction that a real universe exists anterior to organic life, out of which organisms have themselves evolved. Dewey expressly defines experience as the intercourse of a living being with the physical and social environment; wherever there is experience,—and so wherever there is reality,—there must be a living organism.<sup>1</sup> This means, if it means anything, that reality has no content for us except in terms of the activities of organisms. For science, however, the organic situation is plainly not reality, but only one particular form that reality may assume; there is no reason at all apparent for reducing the cosmos to the necessity, if it is to maintain its status, of coöperating in some human act. Even for biology, the central rôle of organic action is due not to anything in the nature of reality, but simply to a selective interest in a special problem; this activity becomes a point from which all reality may be said to radiate only when we shift our standing, and take, instead, the position of an inner witness, an active agent, or doer, or experiencer, interested not in impersonal and scientific observation, but in “living.”

And when we make this shift, it becomes much less easy to meet the objection that “experience” is being taken no longer as reality, in any commonly accepted sense, but as some par-

<sup>1</sup> *Creative Intelligence*, p. 8; *Essays in Experimental Logic*, p. 7.

ticular person's experience—a psychological and, when it is properly defined, “subjective” fact. These “things” which enter into experience are my perceptions and thoughts of things, utilized for the limited purposes of an individual organism; and such knowledge does not cease to be my knowing because the situation which I recognize is an objective one. Dewey's reason for denying the identification of experience with *my* experience,—that, namely, the self is a form of experience, and not experience a possession of the self,—holds only when the point at issue is already prejudged. *If* reality means only what it is experienced as, and *if* knowledge has no dimension except as a process of inquiry, then the “self” must come into being only with the explicit experience or recognition of a self. But the whole claim breaks down in the face of the pragmatist's own assumption of a “situation” which is larger than the thinking process itself. The fact plainly is, that if we presuppose a state of affairs within which thinking or knowledge enters as a subordinate stage, this non-cognitive situation, if it is to be talked about at all, must be known by someone as existing in its own right, and not merely as a case of knowing, which by definition it is not; and then there must be propositions true about it which are not a part of what it was *experienced as*. To hold that the object perceived or acted on passes wholly into the object as known, this last being a subsequent and altered form of it, and that there is no transcendent reference back to the non-cognitive experience, is for the original “thing” simply to disappear from the universe of reflective discourse, save for a non-natural philosopher standing outside the world and contemplating it, freed from the limitations which the definition of knowledge imposes. A fearsome noise—a purely non-cognitive reality—changes, we are told, into a harmless and familiar one under the influence of cognitive analysis; but how then do we “know” what it was before it changed, so as to contrast it with its altered appearance *as known*?

Once more we find the difficulty met only by the process of arbitrary definition. A past fact, at least, the critic urges, must be known in its own right as a fact not now present; and so in this case knowledge is not merely a process of thinking going on, but points back to a reality whose existence lies beyond the knowing experience. No, Dewey replies, you are confusing the content of the judgment with the reference of that content; the content of my idea about yesterday's rain certainly involves past time, but the distinctive or characteristic aim of judgment is none the less to give this content a future reference.<sup>1</sup> But there are *two* forms of reference in the situation, in addition to the logical content of knowledge for which pastness is indeed not something *in* the past, but only an abstract and timeless essence; and to assume that the practical reference to future use is the "distinctive" form, which justifies us in ignoring the contemplative or cognitive reference to an actual past, is simply a refusal to face the particular difficulty charged.

And now to turn back to the special point in question, *if* it may be regarded as a possibility that an identical piece of experience can be reflected on in some subsequent thought, and truths about it discovered that were not realized when the experience took place, there is nothing to prevent its having belonged to the limited circle of "my" life, even though it was not at the time recognized *as* mine. And that this is actually so of the sort of experience to which Dewey's description applies, seems at any rate too natural an interpretation to be simply brushed aside. Nor does the insistence that the experience is always "social" alter the case in the slightest degree. It is true that in my activities I recognize real persons, as I recognize real things; they enter into the experienced situation, and are essential to its significance. But that which makes it describable as a "single" situation is the way in which it grows out of the activities of one particular organism. The

<sup>1</sup> *Influence of Darwin*, p. 161

reactions of other organisms belong merely to the cognitive content, psychologically, of the reconstructing process,—or, in biological terms, to the environment,—and do not *constitute* the process as a specific activity; this last will always be found translating itself into an individual, and not a composite affair.

9. The point of the preceding criticism is, then, not that Dewey's account of knowledge is an inaccurate account of the fact as he defines it, but that his definition rules out other aspects that are essential to any full description of the real world. In the end his sole justification for this lies in the arbitrary selection of a problem, and the will to see things only in the light of this. It may very well be true that *ethical* inquiry can be conducted without its being necessary first to become an epistemologist; but it does not follow that no one has a right to interest himself in a different field, where epistemology may still be a matter of legitimate concern. Meanwhile when we once recognize that we are electing to deal only with the matter of ends, or of ideals, Dewey's practical contentions can be considered on their own merits, as the attempt to supply a method for a naturalistic conception of progress which avoids the pitfalls alike of utopianism, and of a mechanistic materialism. That ideals are not something to which to flee for spiritual refuge, but militant weapons of reform; that they do not preëxist in a higher world, but are continuous with natural events whose possibilities they express; that they are not ready-made standards, but the creation of active intelligence, formed in the process of dealing with specific situations; that life does not get its value from remote cosmic reason, but evolves its own values; that good is not abstract and absolute, but plural and concrete; and that not perfection, but the ever-widening process of perfecting, constitutes the final goal,—all this is a distinctive point of view which, whether fully defensible or not, is at least straightforward and unambiguous.

10. Nevertheless even here the metaphysical denial of epistemology, and the determination to remove from knowledge any conscious act of reference to reality beyond as a part of the very meaning that experience carries within itself, weakens to an extent the verisimilitude of the ethical analysis. In reducing values to valuing—the significance which objects come to take on for a given situation in the process of finding its appropriate solution,—all values become instrumental values, or means to an end rather than the end itself. Ends, Dewey urges, are not values, nor do we argue about them. Ends are given to us, forced upon us by the life process; and it is not until some end is already present, in the form of a definite problem clamoring to be solved, that valuing, and with it values, comes into existence. Take for example the illustration of purchasing a suit of clothes. The various aspects of price, style, quality and the like, which enter into my choice, represent no standardized values; the weight to be assigned to each emerges as the process of valuation proceeds. Meanwhile the suit-buying itself is presupposed before a problem can arise; and if we ask *why* the end is chosen, the only answer is, Because we cannot help it, because the state of affairs demands it.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless the verbal situation here is not altogether a comfortable one. It does strike us as a little strange to say that we never deliberate about ends, but only about means; at least we make a natural distinction between elements which enter into and make up the satisfying nature of what we want, and those which are *merely* a means to its attainment, as signing a check is the means to the securing of our suit of clothes. And the difficulty seems to go back, again, to the refusal to recognize that knowledge is anything more than problem-solving, or that we can be said to know in the sense of a reflective or contemplative reference to an object. The difficulty may take either of two forms. If we accept literally

<sup>1</sup> *Essays in Experimental Logic*, Ch. 14.

the biological side of Dewey's teaching, the whole conception of value, to begin with, except in the sense in which the wheels and cogs of a machine have value, seems to slip from our grasp. On strictly behavioristic terms, the end to which the valuation process looks is simply the physical adjustment of forward-moving action. Whether Dewey himself recognizes more than this, is not easy to determine with certainty from his language. He does indeed allow that as a factor in activity—as distinct from “knowing,”—a thing has value in the sense that we love it, prize it, cling to it; but do the former terms here mean anything in addition to the last one? In so far as experience is interpreted as biological activity,—and at some point in his descriptions of the fact, there is always a form of expression to suggest this,—prizing can be nothing more than “acting to perpetuate the object's presence.” And so far no value is provided for in terms of what we call a *sense* of value. It is only an atavistic return to subjective categories which prevents us from recognizing that “satisfaction” has in such a case no more meaning for an organism than for a printing press. Satisfaction in the proper sense is a kind of inner experience not open to the scientific observer; it is suffused with feeling and not a mere form of movement, a state of felt enjoyment in acting and not a bare physical act.

Now this is the sort of end that we naturally say has “intrinsic” value—an end which is appealing in itself, and not simply useful as a means. And having enjoyed such satisfying experiences, we surely *seem* to be able to hold them contemplatively before the mind, and recognize their quality of desirableness, or their “value.” There is no need to retract the concession that in the concrete, the value which constitutes a specific human aim is created in the process of evaluating; past values *are* instrumental in a sense, in that in contributing to the new act they may need to be revalued. Nevertheless they are instruments of a special sort; and unless we could thus

envisage ends as desirable and valuable in themselves, we should be badly handicapped in settling on a new course of action. When we consult a physician it is true that, in terms of the immediate problem before us, the restoration of health, not health itself, is the end we seek. But unless health independently were recognized by us as a good, why should we want to restore it?—there is no purely biological force that drives sick men to a doctor. We act, Dewey has told us, not because the end has value, but because we have to act, because life is bound to go on. Now, irrespective of the fact that there might be occasions when the process of evaluation would call for death rather than for further living, the objection that will naturally be felt to this is, that it appears to make life automatic, and our ends the outcome of the situation wholly, rather than of a reflective sense of what kind of activity is for us worth while. But our choice is not limited to the assigning of value to elements within a special and fated kind of act. Life indeed forces on us the need that we *do something*, since refraining from action, even, is an act; but this is far too vague and indeterminate to mean anything in terms of concrete problems. Between any particular kind of end and others, we always have a choice; and to make this choice, we find ourselves perforce adopting the contemplative attitude of envisaging tentative ends or values—values in the large, embodied in terms of specific past experiences of satisfaction,—which is presupposed by, rather than reducible to, the activity of fresh evaluating, and which is entirely comparable with that transcendent reference in other and less directly practical judgments which Dewey's whole theory ignores.

#### § 4. *Other Pragmatists. Pearson. Baldwin*

1. In view of its short period of existence, the literature of pragmatism, most of it highly controversial, has been voluminous, especially in the pages of the various philosophical



journals. Among the pragmatists A. W. Moore,—whose *Pragmatism and Its Critics* is the clearest popular exposition of the creed,—H. Heath Bawden, and, in the field of the philosophy of religion, E. S. Ames, are representatives of the so-called Chicago School, which owes its existence to Dewey's teaching, John Russell and H. M. Kallen are influenced more directly by James; while Schiller finds a disciple in D. A. Murray. Russell, originally a vigorous critic of pragmatism, is notable as affording proof that philosophers are occasionally open to conviction by argument. An early manifesto of the Chicago group is the volume of *Studies in Logical Theory* by Dewey and a number of his pupils, published in 1906; while more recently another coöperative book called *Creative Intelligence* has appeared, to which nine philosophers contribute. Coinciding in a general way with the pragmatic tendency in some of its larger features, is the reproduction of Bergson's philosophy in a literature, largely expository however, which has already attained considerable proportions; H. Wildon Carr's is the most prominent name in this connection. A pragmatic motive is also apparent in certain individual thinkers who do not so readily submit to classification. Henry Sturt has already been mentioned in connection with personal idealism. In Edward D. Fawcett, the romantic impulse conspicuous in James and Schiller is still more pronounced. Fawcett conceives of nature as the product of an ever-changing cosmic Imagination, a game which the Imagination plays with itself. He has in common with pragmatism its acceptance of the reality of change and time, of novelty and spontaneity unchecked by fixed or preordained directions of creation, and of the subordinate place of the conceptual framework of science—a secondary product that has no reality outside its human creators' heads, and that serves merely as a practical tool—in comparison with the rich and unstinted variety of the imaginal world, with its concrete and vivid sensuous qualities.

2. It is here also that one may most naturally refer to

two other contemporaneous writers, one primarily a naturalist, and the other a psychologist. Karl Pearson is the most thoroughgoing English representative of the ideal of scientific method which is taken over by most of the pragmatists, and which looks upon scientific concepts as a logical shorthand for summarizing and ordering the facts of immediate sensational experience. In the very statement of his thesis, however, Pearson adds a supplementary claim which complicates it. These concepts, it appears, are not mere intellectual formulæ, but play an active part in life as well; they intervene in the evolutionary process, and help us to fit conduct to sense impressions more skilfully and quickly. But in thus locating science itself in a larger situation, and taking thought as a means of organic adjustment in the struggle for existence, we have passed beyond a mere description of sensations to an attempt at causal explanation, which rests upon that very notion of a world of reality, outside the flux of feeling, of which Pearson's sensationalism supposes itself to have gotten rid. It is true a way is found of withdrawing the concession; but it is at the cost of increasing the improbabilities involved. To escape attributing the laws which resume the routine of phenomena to anything beyond the conscious content itself, the suggestion is made that this routine may perhaps be due, not to the environment, but to the organized conscious subject, which creates order by its selective activity in picking out data from what is in itself a universal chaos.<sup>1</sup> But the whole conception of survival loses its point if there is no determinate reality to which we need to adjust ourselves, corresponding to the routine which science formulates. Doubtless the particular form of description is a human achievement. But if the achievement is to get us anywhere, it must have an explanatory value also with reference to a world on whose sequences man's survival depends; evolution and natural selection, at the least, are natural causes which are required to lend to conceptual

<sup>1</sup> *Grammar of Science*, Ch. 3, Sec. 12.

shorthand a practical utility, and not mere conceptual shorthand themselves.

The same resort to what his principles leave meaningless is apparent in Pearson's whole treatment of the physical world as a complex of sensations. This everywhere presupposes a real nervous system, picking up messages from a surrounding reservoir of forces realistically conceived, however mysterious they may be in their nature. Pearson's favorite metaphor is that of a great telephone exchange, which is present to the operator only in terms of the sounds that occur at his receiving instrument. But if the entire world of the operator is limited to these sounds, the exchange—which gives all its point to the illustration—is at once dissipated into thin air; the explanation presupposes that we know a reach of fact of which its outcome is to show that nothing can possibly be known, not even so much as to give us ground for imagining it to exist. The lack of rigor in Pearson's logic may be illustrated by his suggestion that we gain the right to abandon solipsism, and to accept the existence of other and independent selves, through recognizing the chance that science may conceivably some day, by arranging proper (physical) connections between my (physical) brain and that of my neighbor, bring his sensations actually within the circle of my experience.<sup>1</sup>

3. In James Mark Baldwin, many of the more strictly psychological features of pragmatism—its emphasis on the genetic method, on the active and selective character of human thinking, on the instrumental relationship of thought to wider human ends—are defended in much the fashion of James and Schiller. But Baldwin stops short of a pragmatic metaphysics, and accepts expressly the control of thought by reality which it has to recognize if it is to think truly. Accordingly a place is left for neutral and objective truth, as a system of commonly observable relationships freed from direct dependence on a preferential human interest and interpretation, even

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Ch. II, Sec. 5.

though it be true that knowledge grows originally out of special interests, and that the knowledge system has its justification in the further ends which it may be made to serve. Baldwin's own metaphysics, for which he invents the title of Pancelism, finds in the æsthetic experience the clue to the true nature of reality. All other interpretative concepts fail, in that they lend themselves to dualisms which they cannot overcome. Thus knowledge and teleological value, the true and the good, can never be translated fully into terms one of the other. Even the religious conception fails to achieve unity; as ideal, God is a postulate beyond the grasp of intellectual apprehension, while in so far as he is actual he is not ideal, but remains a finite person along with other persons. It is only in achieving and enjoying the beautiful that we fully realize the real, and are released from the bondage of urgent and divided motives; in beauty, the dualisms of the mental life—of theoretical and practical, mind and body, inner and outer, freedom and necessity, the actual and the ideal—merge in an immediate contemplative value of real presence. Feeling, rather than reason or will, is thus the ultimate organ of reality.

## CHAPTER VIII

### NEO-REALISM

#### § 1. *English Neo-Realism. G. E. Moore*

1. The realism of the latter part of the nineteenth and the opening of the twentieth century was on the whole too sporadic, and too little marked by sensational features, to attract any very large amount of attention either from the dominant idealism, or from its younger rival pragmatism. In more recent years, however, realism has suddenly developed into an aggressive school, characterized by an intense class consciousness, and a lively faith in its own destiny. Traces at least of all of its distinctive doctrines can be found in the past; but these doctrines are given an explicit logical setting which justifies its claim to rank as a genuine philosophical novelty. Here also the task of evaluating the movement is complicated, however, as in the case of pragmatism, by the fact that it combines several motives whose relation to one another is not at once obvious; and indeed in the end it is open to question whether we have to do with a single tendency, or with several rival ones.

Neo-realism and pragmatism meet on common ground in their hostility to two foes—absolutism on the one hand, and representative dualism on the other. To both of these neo-realism opposes the thesis, that we have an immediate knowledge of reality that is non-mental in its nature; though such a doctrine bears a different emphasis according to the context. As against idealism, it insists that things are not in

any sense dependent upon consciousness for their existence or their nature, but pass in and out of the knowledge relationship unchanged. As against dualism, it denies the interposition of any sensation, or idea, or mental state, to mediate our acquaintance with the independent fact, and maintains that the object is present in knowledge identically and in person. This theory of sense perception takes indeed two very different forms. In the one of them it still leaves the "mental" standing over against the physical, but reduces the mental from a "state of consciousness" to a mental *act*; in its more radical development, consciousness and mind are eliminated altogether as entities, and become merely relationships of a special sort into which physical objects may enter among themselves. But on the fundamental issue neo-realists are all agreed.

2. To justify this conception of the independence of the object of knowledge and its consequent non-mental character, various considerations are adduced; but there is one in particular which is of special significance, and which brings us into contact with the second important aspect of neo-realistic doctrine—the logical one. "This argument rests upon the so-called "externality of relations." If, as the neo-realist contends in opposition to the idealist, terms may stand in relation without being modified by the relationship, it is open to suppose that of the knowledge relation this also is the case; and we are accordingly in a position to allow full weight to the empirical evidence in favor of such an epistemological realism. Meanwhile apart also from this special consequence for the knowledge problem, the theory of external relations has other and more general bearings on the metaphysics of neo-realism. Thus it gives, as against the idealistic standard of a single organized system, the possibility that the elements of reality may be known truly by themselves, and so vindicates analysis as the true philosophical method, in opposition to the belief among idealists that, in breaking up relational complexes, analysis alters also the character of their components. Still more sig-

nificant is a further ontological conclusion. If relations are as genuinely real as the things which they relate, if they are not additions of the thinking mind, but are discovered by the mind as truly as sense data are discovered, it is necessary to find in the non-mental world a place for entities not in any obvious sense physical. The outcome is a revival of Platonic realism. Since universals are there to be discovered, and have reality independently of being known, there must be a realm of being to which they eternally belong; and if we apply the term existence to entities that are located at some particular time or place, we may call this realm the realm of subsistence, and say, with Plato, that apart from the world revealed through the senses, there is another and subsisting world laid up in the heavens, and inhabited by such things as logical principles, ethical ideals, mathematical relations, Beauty, and Truth, and all the eternal verities.

3. The starting point of English neo-realism is probably to be looked for in two articles by George E. Moore which appeared in the philosophical journal *Mind* about the opening of the new century, one of them dealing with the psychological theory of perception, while the other involves the logical motive that constitutes the second main direction of the neo-realistic interest. Here both the theses receive a concise expression that makes them relatively more easy to examine; and it will accordingly be convenient to take them as the text for certain general comments that are intended to apply to their appearance in other contexts also.

Moore's published volumes belong to the field of ethics, where his neo-realism takes the form of a contention that "goodness" is an ultimate and objectively subsisting entity which cannot be further analyzed, but can only be perceived. This same contention is applied to "truth" in the earlier of the two articles referred to;<sup>1</sup> truth, like goodness, is an objective character, also unanalyzable, which belongs to certain

<sup>1</sup> *The Nature of Judgment*, *Mind*, N. S. Vol. 8, p. 176.

judgments. Such a conclusion is the natural, if not the necessary consequence of the peculiar neo-realistic attitude toward knowledge. When the idealistic doctrine that truth is only definable in terms of a comprehensive unity of logical system is repudiated, and the truth character is attached to single propositions, two main possibilities present themselves. If the abstract thought content involved in knowledge is distinguished from the *object* of knowledge, then it is open to define truth as a relation in which our thought stands to the object which it knows; but in case such a dualism also be rejected, and knowledge described as immediate presence to awareness or intuition, there is no obvious meaning to its claim to "truth," if not in terms of some internal property directly open to inspection.

Moore attempts to show that such an issue is as a matter of fact logically presupposed in every possible proof or test of truth, and that this necessarily leads to a view of reality as conceptual in its nature. What in a judgment I mean to assert is nothing about my mental states, but always a specific connection of concepts, recognized as objectively valid, and not as mere ideas in my mind. Accordingly if truth and falsehood have their sole meaning as applied to a relation between concepts, it is impossible to subordinate concepts to existents, as if these last were something more ultimate, and supplied a standard by which the truth of conceptual knowledge is to be determined. Truth cannot depend on a relation to existents, since the proposition by which it is so defined must itself be true; and the truth of this cannot be established, without a vicious circle, by exhibiting its dependence on an existent. An appeal to the "facts" is useless; for in order that a fact may be made the basis of an argument, it must be put in the form of a proposition, and this proposition already must be supposed true. It seems necessary, then, to hold that the fundamental basis of reality is the logical concept; existence itself is nothing but a special concept, and the existential judg-



ment, "man exists," means only that the concept man and the concept existence stand in a specific relation. All that exists is thus composed of concepts necessarily related to one another in definite ways, and likewise to the concept of existence, and a concept cannot itself be described either as an existent or as part of one, since in the conception of an existent it is already presupposed. So if a judgment is false, this is not because my *ideas* do not correspond to reality, but because such a conjunction of concepts is not to be found among existents. And the peculiar kind of conjunction which constitutes a proposition true cannot be further defined, but must be immediately recognized.

In one form or another, the general point of view here suggested reappears constantly in neo-realistic metaphysics. In its final nature reality is logical essence—an affair of terms and propositions. It is significant that the same result has been found emerging in the rival philosophy of idealism. Neo-realism, to be sure, is for the most part pluralistic rather than monistic. It denies that we have any reason to suppose that these logical entities are necessarily grouped together in a single organic system; and in any case it asserts emphatically the self-subsistence of the logical fact, as against the demand for an underlying principle, or source, or universal self-consciousness, to bring unity about. But in both alike logic tends to become more ultimate than existence. And in both cases the difficulty of meeting the contention is the same; since we cannot think of anything whatever except in terms of concepts, or of universals, if we once allow ourselves to be tied down to a world of description, no logic can compel us to go beyond its boundaries. Philosophers, who are mainly interested in ideas, have always been under a strong temptation thus to force reality into a conceptual mold.

4. The first thing to be said about this is, as before, that it clearly does not satisfy our normal sense of what "reality" means. Whatever existence in itself may be, it assuredly is

something more than the *concept* of existence, whether this be regarded as a single logical entity, or as a complex of more ultimate entities. Meanwhile it is true, however, that the situation is not at all a simple one; and there are aspects of it which may seem to give backing to the neo-realistic claim even in the eyes of common sense. This is most evident when we try to make clear to ourselves the nature of relations. We should unquestionably be inclined to admit that relations are in some sense real. When I perceive the difference of red and blue, I do not naturally suppose that my mind has added something to the colors in comparing them; they actually *are* different, and would still have been so had the difference never been noted. At the same time, we find it a little hard to give the relation quite the same standing that physical facts possess. Relations, accordingly, appear to have a peculiar status, which readily suggests the notion of a Platonic subsistence.

On the other hand, however, common sense would probably refuse to go further, and attribute to subsistence a superior, or even a strictly independent status. We should ordinarily not be ready to assign being of *any* sort to "difference," were there not things already in existence to *be* different. Granting existences, there is a strong compulsion to believe that a great variety of relationships really hold between them, or, as we may put it, subsist; but apart from these realities that themselves are more than subsistents, the relationships simply would not be at all. It might be replied to this that while, indeed, terms must be supposed before we can have relations, these terms may themselves be universal terms, and so have no need to be thought of as existing. But this at least gives to the term subsistence an extension which diminishes very sensibly the initial persuasiveness of its metaphysical claims. While we do have a strong natural conviction of the reality, or subsistence, of relations between the elements of the actually existing world,—including real ideas and real acts,—we cannot appeal to such a conviction in favor of the independent

being of concepts or universals—of whiteness that is not any white in particular, and of man apart from individual men. On the contrary, most people would feel great difficulty, not merely in believing in, but in attaching any definite meaning to the notion that whiteness has being of any sort when taken apart both from existing white things, and from existing ideas in the minds of human beings; especially since, by bringing in “ideas,” we seem able to give a sense to all that legitimately can be said about the “subsistence” of whiteness. For if we assume, as we have an apparent right to do, that by thinking, and the use of ideas, we are able to refer to characteristics attaching to the actually existing world, to hold their abstract essence before the mind, and, by analysis and comparison of their content, to detect the same relationships that they contribute to the existences in which they are embodied, we should still be in a position to talk of conceptual facts as actual characters of the world, and not as merely subjective or mental, without being called upon to assign them to a mysterious realm of their own, and then having to meet the further problem of bringing such a realm into connection with particular facts of existence and of cognition. For on this showing concepts are always attached to something that exists,—in their origin, to the cases of existence from which they are collected, and in their abstract conceptual form, to knowing processes which also are existing facts, and to whose generalizing agency that logical function is due which renders concepts possible sources of inference.

5. And now this alternative also suggests an answer to Moore’s logical argument. What alone this seems to show is that we cannot *demonstrate* the truth of anything without presupposing true propositions; but that is not to *define* truth. And as a matter of fact the truth of a proposition, it may be claimed, does not really lie where Moore finds it. Propositions, to begin with, do not themselves subsist, though the relations which are set forth by them do; a proposition *as* a proposition, if we

follow the natural view, is simply a way in which a relational complex is translated into ideas, or terms of mind. And meanwhile this relation which a proposition formulates is as such not true; it simply *is*. There is no more reason for calling the relation of equality between  $x$  and  $y$  true, than for calling the existence of a table true; both are facts simply, which become "truths" only as they are referred to by a mental belief that takes the form of a proposition. What in strictness the truth claim here involves is, that the proposition, as a mental apprehension, correctly corresponds to the relationship perceived; just as a qualitative character is "truthful," not as it exists in the thing it qualifies, but as its presence in a knowledge content is an accurate transcript of its non-cognitive status. Grant that truth is only the perception of a logical relationship, and it does apparently follow that knowledge is reducible to propositions illuminated internally by their own self-evidence; but on the assumption that what is thus revealed is a relation, not a truth, and that belief, whether true or false, involves, in addition to any possible apprehension of content, a reference to reality such as carries us beyond logic, and the reason for subordinating existence to concepts disappears. Moore's whole argument implies, again, that we have already *defined* truth in such a way that the object of belief is identical with the logical terms through which it is described; and this is not a compulsory assumption.

6. Meanwhile even apart from the soundness of this criticism, there is one problem or set of problems in particular confronting the neo-realist, on which no agreement seems to have been reached. This has to do with the connection in which the "data" which for neo-realism are the immediate objects of knowledge stand to the physical things with which science deals, and, on the other hand, with the relation, among these data themselves, of the logical knowledge of universals to the particular data of sense. And this lends a considerable degree of uncertainty to the doctrine of sense data also, which

constitutes perhaps the leading motive in the development of the movement in England, and which gets expression in Moore's other article in *Mind*.<sup>1</sup> If however we are satisfied not to press these further questions, up to a point the neo-realistic theory of sense perception is simple, and extremely ingenious; and if it is true, it is of a character to short-circuit a large number of the controversies most familiar in the philosophy of the past. English empiricism, to take a typical example, had been wont to assume, as indeed self-evident, that that with which we come into immediate contact in our lives is sensation, or feeling—a psychical or mental stuff; the "object," accordingly, if there be such a thing at all, is not given directly, but can only be inferred. This assumption Moore thinks is due to overlooking a distinction which, once recognized, throws a new light on the entire situation. What is the so-called psychical fact, or sensation?—as psychical, it is not mere redness, but *awareness of red*. There are, that is, two things involved in close relationship—the sense datum, and the awareness. But with this distinction noted, it becomes at once a question what right we have to talk about the redness itself as subjective. The "awareness" is indeed subjective; but the awareness is not red. It is not as a red awareness, but as an awareness *of* red, that a sensation is describable; sensation, in other words, is a compound of two facts, and in the second fact, or the "redness," we already are in contact with something just as objective as chairs or tables. We do not have, accordingly, to find a way of getting outside the mind from the subjective starting point of sensation; in sensation, we are already beyond the subjective.

Around this fundamental thesis that the mental is not a stuff, sensational or otherwise, but a diaphanous *act* which proceeds directly to an objective content, a considerable literature has grown up during the last few years, which undertakes to reconstruct the philosophic situation in a way to correct ideal-

<sup>1</sup> *The Refutation of Idealism*, *Mind*, N S, Vol 12, p 433

ism, while avoiding also the difficulties attendant on a dualism between ideas and things. The position has certain apparent advantages which account for the warm welcome it has received, and which make it obviously worth while to try it out as a serious hypothesis; Moore's attempt to lend it logical necessity, however, fails to be entirely convincing. In denying that color, for example, is the content or quality of a sensation, and that there is any such verifiable entity as a "blue awareness," advantage is taken of an ambiguity in the latter word to which attention has had already to be called in previous connections. It of course will have to be allowed that if we mean by awareness an act of knowing, a blue "act" comes near to being an absurdity. Nevertheless the English mind, at any rate, has never been conscious of any particular difficulty in talking about a blue "feeling," where the blueness is intended actually to characterize the nature of the felt fact, just as painfulness characterizes the nature of another felt fact of a comparable sort. In other words, "consciousness," implicitly 'f not always with entire clearness, has been distinguished from "knowing," as an existence from an act—an existence constituted just by the indefinable fact of "presence to feeling"; meanwhile this cannot exist of course apart from some specific form or nature, color quality being among the "natures" which thus can be existentially and immediately felt. The reality of such a feeling awareness, which *is*, though it does not in the distinctive sense "know" itself to be, each man will have to determine by appeal to his own experience; but the issue cannot be settled fairly by ignoring the possibility, and talking as if awareness, or consciousness, could only mean "knowledge of," to the exclusion of "feeling of." And if painful feeling, for example, be thus regarded as distinguishable from a "knowledge" of pain, and as capable of existing in the absence of such knowledge, then the separation on which Moore's realistic theory of sense perception is based would fall away, and we

should be left, as before, with a mental fact of existence other than the diaphanous mental act.

And in denying the more traditional analysis, neo-realism has also, as has been pointed out, a number of further problems of its own to face. What is the status of these "sense data"—to use the term most commonly adopted for indicating the absence of that mental character that "sensation" suggests? Are they to be identified with the physical object of science? or are they purely logical entities, like relations? or have they some standing midway between the two? Are they permanent and persisting, or intermittent, and dependent on the interaction of the organism with its physical surroundings? Again, how are we to conceive the mental fact, the awareness or act of knowing? What is an awareness which seems to take its specific character from the independent reality of which it is aware? Does a purely diaphanous act give the imagination anything to work upon? And however these questions may be answered, one general difficulty in any case confronts a theory for which reality is given to perception, or knowledge, face to face in its own proper person; how under such conditions can we ever be mistaken? If nothing mental intervenes between the act that constitutes consciousness and the entity that is known, and if the fact of its being known means always that it is identically present, what chance is there of its being known otherwise than as it actually is? Evidently we need a fuller construction of reality before the situation can be estimated fairly.

## § 2. *S. Alexander*

1. The new theory of knowledge receives its most complete and systematic formulation in S. Alexander. In its more typically neo-realistic aspect, Alexander's philosophy involves a psychology of the mental life conceived as reducible entirely to

will-acts, all possible content being placed, as the neo-realistic insight demands, upon the object side. It would naturally seem as if it might be difficult to construct a science out of "acts" whose common nature we can describe only as cases of "awareness"; and it is indeed questionable whether Alexander's results will satisfy the scientific psychologist. As a matter of fact, however, he finds something more to add to their description; he discovers in mental acts, that is, an experienced character of "direction" which is open to psychological discrimination. This character, which has a metaphysical bearing also, it is not quite easy to verify with assurance; and one may feel a natural doubt whether Alexander would himself have hit upon it had not a metaphysical presupposition first pointed the way. It is not to be interpreted as constituted simply by the varying nature of the *objects* present to consciousness, though this is what one might have thought likely from a theory that defines consciousness as the common element in experience, denuded of all varieties of content; and it is distinguished also from muscular sensations of activity about the head, which may accompany it. As distinct from both of these, Alexander thinks he can recognize an actual spatial movement, located vaguely in the brain, which characterizes the process of "enjoying" or of "living through" a mental activity, and which varies literally in physical direction with the difference of objective content.<sup>1</sup>

¶ Meanwhile one point occasions some difficulty here; how do we come to have that knowledge of the mental fact which we clearly need to have if there is to be a science of psychology? For if knowledge is the relation between an act and an objective content, the act itself, which by definition is not a content, cannot be known; it cannot place itself over against itself in the way that knowledge demands. Alexander meets the difficulty by distinguishing two different ways of knowing, —contemplative knowledge, where the object is thus set over

<sup>1</sup> *Space, Time and Deity*, Vol. I, pp. 97 ff.



against the mind, and the actual being, or experiencing, or enjoying of reality, where there is no such inner duplicity of subject and object. It is in this second sense only that I can be said to know my own inner life, as an immediate experience or enjoyment, and not as a contemplated object; I am aware of my awareness not as I strike a ball, but as I strike a stroke. And this is quite possibly a real distinction; but it does not seem to help out the particular difficulty in question. For a science exists only for contemplative thought. And while we might be in some immediate sense aware of the present experience in which we are immersed, this sort of knowledge would not survive the actual moment of the experiencing; we could enjoy it inarticulately so long as it lasted, but to talk of it we should have to bring it before the mind in a different way, and a way that by definition is impossible. The intricacies in which Alexander finds himself involved here are strikingly apparent in his theory of recollection. When I remember an experience of mine in the past, I am not in reality, as I might at first sight suppose, contemplating a past event; this would be, again, to turn mind into a contemplated object. I am, instead, actually reliving the experience, but living it now *in the past*; in the enjoying experience, present, past, and future literally coalesce. Meanwhile it does not help to simplify the situation that in the case of other selves, which can neither be enjoyed nor contemplated, Alexander is compelled to resort to still a third definition of knowledge, as an "assurance" eked out by sympathetic imagination.<sup>1</sup>

2. Before turning to the further implications of this account of mind, in terms of its place in the system of reality, and its relation to the body in particular, a short account will need to be given of the general metaphysical presuppositions of Alexander's philosophy. Briefly, the matrix of reality is composed of Space and Time, in an intimacy of union which turns either into an abstraction when taken by itself. This ultimate

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p 37

stuff possesses no quality except the spatio-temporal quality of motion. From it certain fundamental categories are deducible, in the sense of being determinations empirically implicated in every portion of space-time; and since there is no being that is not made out of space-time stuff, they are necessary determinations for all reality alike. Thus existence, or determinate being, is the occupancy of any space-time in distinction from any other space-time; substance is a piece or contour of space which is the scene of succession; things are complexes of motion differentiated within the one all-containing and all-encompassing system of motion; relations are the spatio-temporal connections of things which follow from the continuity of space-time; causality is the continuity between two different motions, the continuous transition of one physical event into another. And since space-time is the stuff out of which all reality is made, even the universals with which logic deals must themselves be identified with it; there is no logical realm of subsistence that has being apart from the world which the physical sciences know. A universal is a plan or form of configuration of space-time, a spatio-temporal pattern, made possible by the fact that space is uniform or constant in curvature. Each finite complex possesses a universal character in so far as, by embodying laws of construction, it admits without distortion of repetition in space-time, that is, can itself undergo change of place or time, or both, without alteration, or can be replaced by some other finite. Such universals are timeless, not as being out of time, but as being free from limitation to a particular time.

3. For a clue to the completer understanding of this evolving universe of space-time elements, we may turn back again to reality on the relatively high level of mind, and to the theory of the relation in which mind stands to the physical organism. Mind—which is nothing but the substantial totality of its acts of awareness—is neither completely identical with nervous structure, as materialism would maintain, nor yet a

new kind of stuff added to it, and existing alongside it. The mind *is* the nervous system, indeed, space-occupying, and having lines of "direction" literally identical with those of neural process; but it is the nervous system blossoming out into a new quality or dimension—the capacity for awareness. In this way we are able to avoid both parallelism and interactionism. The nervous process is continuous, and never interrupted by something of a different order; and yet at the same time there is no reason to deny that mind has causal efficacy, since a neural activity which is *also* cognitive is by definition different, and so will act differently, from a purely unconscious one.

Now this same relation in which mind stands to the vital processes of which it is a new qualitative development, is also to be found at various lower levels of the developing world. Such a novel "quality," empirically discoverable, though not open to metaphysical explanation, and differing from the categories in that it is present only sporadically in the universe, and does not characterize every bit of space-time alike, appears successively in the shape of primary qualities, of materiality—apprehended in the sensation of resistance offered to the body,—of the secondary qualities, of life—revealed to us through organic and kinæsthetic sensations, which thus are as objective and non-mental as any others,—and, finally, of mind or consciousness. This situation Alexander sums up by saying that, at each level, the new quality is the "mind" of the special forms of the lower level which condition it, and, even, though here the analogy confessedly halts, that time is the mind of space.

There is a sense in which, indeed, through his definition of the knowledge relation as the mere "compresence" of a mental act with its object, this might be held to be more than an analogy; if the definition is taken seriously, everything in the universe might actually appear to know everything else, since the relation of compresence holds universally. But even in terms of mind such a definition can hardly be pressed. There

is obvious utility in it for a realism which asserts the identical presence of objects in knowledge; if all that is needed is that two things should be together in the same universe, our net is undoubtedly broad enough to catch any case of knowing that requires to be explained. But the trouble is that the explanation is too catholic and all-embracing, and the problem faces us, why we should ever be ignorant of anything. Accordingly Alexander, when he is speaking more precisely, qualifies the definition by limiting knowledge in its *proper* sense to cases where one of the compresent elements is an "act of awareness." This, however, is to attach the peculiar differentia of knowledge to the internal structure of the knowing act, where indeed it seems naturally to belong, but where Alexander's neo-realism nevertheless is precluded from finding it, except in the form of an ultimate mystery incapable of rational interpretation. And if the theory that knowledge involves the identical presence of an independently real object leads us to define knowing as a relation of "togetherness," the discovery that this relation is *not* an adequate account of the matter might very well be taken as a hint to revise the original theory, rather than the definition.

4. There is another difficulty in the interpretation of Alexander's position here, of a still more fundamental sort. We have started with space-time as the stuff of reality. Now at best such a doctrine has an initial strangeness; space and time are very far from what we commonly regard as "stuff," and are sure to a first impression to appear too tenuous and abstract to supply the material for world building. Granting, however, that this is nothing but a prejudice, there still remains a question about the status of "quality." Quality is called a "new creation"; but does this mean all that it might seem to mean? Is a quality something actually new in kind, and *different*, therefore, from space-time and motion? or is it still reducible to space-time elements, which have merely taken on "special laws of behavior"? Alexander asserts that qualities

are "at once new, and expressible without residue in terms of the processes proper to the level from which they emerge,"<sup>1</sup> which is perplexing, and seemingly an attempt to ride both horses at once. And whichever way we take it, we find doubts arising. If qualities are really different in kind, we have the very difficult notion of a world of one definite sort developing into a world of an essentially different sort; and in that case, too, we put in jeopardy our right to claim that space-time is the sole reality. *To the degree* in which a world character is different from motion, it is *not* motion; though since it is there, it must nevertheless be a part of reality. On the other hand, an attempt to identify new qualities with new laws of motion merely, is to seek to evade plain facts. This may perhaps be successful when applied to life. Even mind, when once sensational content is dismissed as belonging to the object, leaving only the occupancy of space and time, and spatial direction, as its experienced characters, we might be able to reduce to space-time elements. But this would only locate the residual problem in another place—in the things of the outer world; and wherever we locate them, secondary sense characters stand out as something *sui generis*, and impossible to refine away.

5. Meanwhile the mind-body concept is used to ground another and particularly ingenious extension of philosophical doctrine, which brings us into connection with the field of religion. In the infinite stretch of time, we are bound to suppose that new qualities of existence will appear in the future, as they have appeared in the past, bearing the same relation to the highest form of organization in the preceding stage that mind bears to the nervous structure. Thus we may expect that there will be—perhaps they are already in existence—angelic or Godlike beings for whom our minds will constitute a body, as neural matter constitutes ours. Such Gods, however, cannot be the true objects of religion; for they are them-

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid*, Vol II, p. 45.

selves but finite portions of the space-time world, and for them too a new and higher quality looms ahead. The true basis of religion is not God, but "deity"—the eternal urge of the universe toward new and ever higher forms. Infinite deity thus does not exist, since attainment would make it finite; but the world in its infinity tends toward infinite deity. An empirical sense for this quality of deity in the world, to which the conception of the onward sweep of the cosmic process gives speculative justification, is the distinctive source of religious feeling, which is a feeling *sui generis*, and not to be confused with moral or æsthetic values. It is of course to be recognized that the higher form of being to which creative activity is pointing cannot itself be mind, any more than mind can be identified with the vital organism of which it is a new qualitative expression.

6. The new theory of perception, which is probably to be regarded as the distinguishing mark of the neo-realistic movement in England, has been accepted more or less fully by a number of recent writers, though without the elaborate metaphysical background which it has in the case of Alexander. It is defended by Helen Wodehouse on psychological grounds,—which, however, stop short of most of the metaphysical difficulties,—and by Percy T. Nunn in connection with the theory of scientific method; it underlies the acute critical analysis of the Kantian philosophy by H. A. Prichard; and it is apparently presupposed, though not very fully utilized, in the epistemology of C. D. Broad. Its most elaborate defence, next to that by Alexander, is to be found in the two volumes of John Laird. A variant of the same fundamental thesis appears in C. E. M. Joad, whose theory of knowledge follows views previously set forth in various published articles by G. Dawes Hicks. Here sense knowledge is taken as the active *discrimination* of qualities directly experienced as present in a real object or environment, the conclusion being drawn that since these "appearances" can be distinguished from the Real,

as dependent for their discernment, though not for their existence, on the discriminating mind, and since the mind is then able by its own activity to combine them in various—possibly mistaken—ways, a place is left for error, and so a serious objection to other forms of realism is avoided.

### § 3. *Bertrand Russell*

1. On the whole, the outstanding figure of the new realism is probably that of Bertrand Russell. This position he owes in the first place to his command of the modern mathematical logic, and to the remarkable subtlety and complexity of the abstract logical imagination which he brings from this field to that of philosophy proper. There is a spectacular quality in this well calculated to captivate disciples, and arouse the conviction, shared by Russell himself, that philosophy has at length, and for the first time, entered on its inheritance, and that hereafter no metaphysician need apply who cannot handle expertly the tools of symbolic logic.

And irrespective of the importance of his detailed opinions, there is this further title also to distinction which Russell possesses; in spite of the fact that the burden of his philosophy is pure logic and impersonal truth-seeking, he stands out as one of the very few among the newer realists through whose arguments there shows a vivid emotional temperament, without which philosophy tends always to become a mere intellectual game. For Russell, as for Spinoza, philosophy is the austere vision of eternal truth, majestic in its isolation from man's paltry life. It is not the vision, even, of man's earthly residence, but of the unchanging bonds of logical implication, which are as sublime, and perhaps more interesting in their novelty, when they are the outgrowth of assumptions that have no special pertinency to the world of empirical fact. To this world, and to man's temporal life within it, there can belong

little to satisfy our aspirations; for the philosophic vision, the game is not worth the candle. Only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair can the soul's habitation henceforth be built. "To defy with Promethean constancy a hostile universe, to keep its evils always in view, always actively hated, to refuse no pain that the malice of Power can invent, appears to be the duty of all who will not bow before the inevitable." But it is just through this disillusionment which life brings, that philosophy gets its chance and its justification; the realm of eternal logical natures, of ideals too high to be embodied, is that which alone is left as a refuge to the spirit of the free man who refuses to abase himself before the God of things as they are.

2. For Russell, then, as for philosophical revolutionaries frequently in the past, nearly all that hitherto has gone under the name of philosophy it is necessary now to scrap; in particular, the notion that philosophy has anything to say about the hopes and interests of man as a human being, or that it can attempt the task of thinking out a reasonable way of looking at the universe into which these shall enter as a significant factor, is to be set resolutely aside. Such a task has two defects: it does not give occasion for those qualities of austerity and intellectual distinction which characterize the superior mind, and which require for their exercise an aristocratic detachment and condescension; and it cannot meet the test of logical demonstration, which alone gives philosophy the title to be called scientific. It is evident that there is no particular use in trying to reason with this delimitation of the philosopher's task; it is only one more of the many attempts to give legislative power to a personal type of interest. A narrow set of very technical problems it may be that the new method is calculated to advance,—problems that have always been incidental to the work of the great philosophers, however, rather than constitutive of it. But so long as men's intellectual interests do actually have a wider swing, the whole history of



philosophy shows that no attempt to browbeat them into accepting some particular ideal of "science," which fails to gratify what they feel as a legitimate curiosity, can possibly succeed. What Russell himself indeed would seem to be thinking of under the head of "ethics" will possibly account in part for his indifference, from his own pessimistic standpoint of rebellion against society, ethics is apparently identified with the social camouflage of customary morality, through which existing powers and institutions create a morale favorable to their own continuance. But that all human values whatsoever, including the valuation which condemns the evils and hypocrisies of the world, are to be taken simply as facts of personal opinion, with no attempt to adjust them philosophically, or to think them in their relation to the universe at large, can in the nature of the case have itself nothing but a personal whim to back it.

3. Meanwhile it is one unfortunate consequence of a difference in the conception of aim and method here, that the philosopher who happens primarily to be interested in the "real" world finds it difficult ever to be quite sure to what extent Russell's results actually compete with his own. Philosophy, it appears, is concerned only with those logical relationships that belong to all possible worlds, and any property by which our actual world is distinguished from others that are abstractly possible must be ignored by it. But truths that hold of every possible world cannot give us any particularly useful information about the present one, or help much in solving problems to which its nature in particular gives rise; and unless, therefore, one finds his sufficient blessedness in the exercise of logical ingenuity for its own sake, he will get no special comfort from the new philosophy. In this pure logic differs from logic applied to science. No discovery of an actual causal series can be entirely irrelevant to human life; but it is easily possible, by taking arbitrary postulates, to trace very definite logical consequences from them, and yet

for these consequences to be practically barren and lacking in human interest. Philosophy, if it is to be felt by most men as significant, will have to undertake the rationalization of actual human beliefs; and such beliefs inevitably take us beyond the mere manipulation of hypothetical concepts, and get their content from the practical demands of life and organic needs.

And to the lay mind, this leads to a question that arises continually in connection with Russell's logical doctrine; when one finds various new and startling information about this or that familiar category, put forward as the indubitable testimony of logic, and then turns to the category itself only to learn that, in order to insure these consequences, it has to be defined in a way that shows only a remote connection with his familiar human meanings, he is at a loss to determine whether he has really found out more about the world in which he lives, or whether he has only found what follows from a set of definitions that make no pretence of conforming to his natural convictions. So, for example, of the new doctrine of the infinite, which Russell regards as perhaps the supreme achievement of the human intellect. I may define the infinite in such a way that it solves certain dialectical puzzles; and for the technical purposes of the mathematician this may be sufficient,—whether it is so or not, is for the mathematician of course to decide. Meanwhile, however, other of the traditional puzzles about the infinite, and indeed the only ones that have greatly impressed the popular mind, may very well be left where they were before, simply because the new definition does not come into contact with them at all. For these difficulties can hardly be disentangled from the imaginative notion of a real world actually existing in time; and an infinity that is a property of classes which, as infinite, are given all at once by the defining property of their members, so that no question of "completion" ever arises, has nothing apparently in common with them. Instead, it goes on to reconstruct the

notion of time itself to meet its dialectical demands, and so gets still further from the common world of experience.

Of course the philosopher may deride the claims of the imagination, and may insist that logic is the only judge. But this is one question on which logic cannot itself pronounce—its own supremacy. Naturally, this does not mean that we have the right if we choose to be illogical or inconsistent. But whether a logical formulation of conditions sufficient to meet a purely logical demand can be allowed to dispense with the need for an appeal to concrete experience capable of being imaginatively contemplated, nothing in the way of dialectic merely can determine. For one who loves (logical) perfection more than life, there will be one answer; for one who loves life more than logical perfection there is likely to be a different one. And the fact accordingly that Russell's own results are quite reckless in their disregard of what things are *experienced as*, will seem unimportant, or very important, according to this initial bias.

4. It becomes somewhat easier to appraise Russell's method, when we turn from the technical abstractions of mathematics to a problem that supposedly has to do with the real world—the problem of sense perception. But even here it is not certain that a decisive issue can be drawn. What in his later writings Russell apparently is trying to do, is to show that on the basis of certain relatively undeniable data—namely, the sense data, or sensibles, which any honest analysis of experience is bound to leave on our hands whatever else it may seem possible to refine away, and the ultimate laws of logic,—we can, by a purely logical construction which makes no appeal to unexperienced or inferred entities, reach a result that will show all the properties actually found in the experienced objects of perception. Now even if this attempt succeeds, it will still leave the main issue unsettled. It is quite possible that, by the exercise of a sufficient amount of logical ingenuity, certain specified results might be shown to be the outcome of a

number of *different* logical constructions, and yet no one of these represent the actual truth of the matter. Russell starts by assuming that *if* such a logical construction can be carried out, it has the right of way, and ought to be preferred over any competing method. But this is, once more, to take for granted what needs establishing. As an interesting exercise in logic, the thing may be worth attempting; and for one who is interested in trying it, it will indeed be a part of the method to make as few assumptions as possible. But there is no decisive reason whatever for supposing that it gets us nearer the truth than other methods would, *unless* we already presuppose the superiority of logic to existence. The ideal would be, as Russell recognizes, the construction of the object out of my own sense data solely, since other persons' data are for me inferred facts, and therefore do not have the inevitability that the method desiderates. But this furnishes a good test of the plausibility of the ideal itself. If I could get along without other persons, I should be logically so much the better off, and no one would have cause for complaint except those in whom the human affections happen unfortunately to be "stronger than the desire for logical economy." But this candid admission of a bias will of course, with most readers, have the opposite effect from that which Russell intends; if it comes to be a choice between our right to posit other selves, and an interest in logical economy, the superiority of the method of construction is likely to be compromised.

And once grant the right, for reasons shown if not for purely logical reasons, to assume certain realities, and in all other respects Russell's method loses entirely the advantage of simplicity. We are, as will appear, compelled to multiply entities to a degree that to the imagination is overwhelming; while as an account of the psychological process of arriving at a belief in objects, there is no comparison between the involved intricacy of Russell's theory, and the straightforwardness of common-sense dualism. In fact, it would almost seem that the

demand it makes upon logical ingenuity is what recommends the method. And if it is held that the theory does not pretend to be genetic, then it may be asked by what short cut man could have arrived at a complex logical construction without the use of logic; and any plausible answer is bound to introduce factors that throw doubt on Russell's logical bias.

The theory is briefly to this effect. The data out of which the external world is to be constructed are, not permanent objects, but those irreducible and momentary qualia into which, when he looks at an object, an observer's experience can be analyzed. These sense data are not to be regarded as subjective; they are distinct from the mental act which apprehends them, and since they are the elements out of which the physical world is constituted, they may even rightly be called physical. But neither are they the persisting physical objects of common sense. While independent of "mind," to the making of them goes a necessary relation to an organism; they exist, that is, outside the mind, without *continuing* to exist when we are no longer looking at them. These appearances which the world presents to me from one particular point of view may be called a "perspective"; and besides the actual "perspectives which enter into my experience and that of other human beings, there are an infinite number of other points of view, to each of which a certain set of data, or possible data, belongs.

{ Now the common belief is that there is one real "thing" which the observer may view from different standpoints, each of these revealing to him a different "appearance" of the thing; for Russell's theory, on the contrary, the appearances are the sole facts that are real, and the thing is only that whole system of appearances of which each "aspect" of a thing is a member. A thing can thus be defined as the entire class of its appearances, including not only those appearances that are actual sense data to some one, but the *sensibilia*, or possible sense data, which represent the appearances that *would* arise

were a certain kind of observer in a certain relation to the object. These appearances are not in a common space; otherwise we should have the task of explaining how different qualia could occupy the same space at the same time. Each observer has only his own private space, and no place in the private world of one observer is identical with a place in the private world of another observer; the common space is, again, a logical construction from these private spaces. Given an object in one perspective, then, the problem is to form the system of all the objects correlated with it in all the perspectives, in a way to give a meaning to the properties which belong to the common-sense notion of a single thing viewed under a multiplicity of aspects by many observers, and located at a definite point in a space common to all of them; and this is what by a very ingenious, but complicated and difficult construction, Russell thinks he has satisfactorily accomplished.

5. Now to begin with, Russell's position would be more persuasive were it not that, even if "things" were actually as real as ordinarily we think them to be, it still would be possible to justify the same data, and to effect the same construction. As a matter of fact we plainly never should have reached the notion of perspectives to begin with, except in terms of appearances to a "mind" occasioned by a cause existing in a common space, and standing in relation to different organisms. And not only is this so; it is significant that we cannot state Russell's theory—at least it would be a highly difficult task which he makes no move to undertake—without continuing at every step to presuppose the common-sense world, and using it to give meaning to our description. With this world assumed, an object would of course be found appearing under various forms according to the position or the distance of an observer; and these appearances might be arranged in series, such as could be used to define the location of the object which they presuppose, and on which their character depends. But just because the undertaking is equally

compatible with two hypotheses, its success cannot be used to give one of them an advantage over the other. This advantage can only come, again, from an initial presumption against existents; and for one who does not share this presumption, Russell's attempt will only go to show—what hardly needed proving—that when we have analyzed a complex situation into elements, we can reverse the process in a way to redefine the whole into which the elements enter. What has been said above will seem to him to indicate clearly that what the logical construction starts from is not a mass of isolated sense data, but data already regarded as belonging to a system, which system has constantly to be held before us if we are not to lose our way completely.

6. And it will probably seem to him, also, that apart from the lack of proof, and from the offence to common convictions, there are serious difficulties in any theory so far advanced about the metaphysical standing of these sensibles which logic uses, and in the account of knowledge which they involve. The notion of sense data is least complicated in Russell's earlier writings, which follow, with some modifications, the familiar neo-realistic doctrine of an act of awareness directed upon a non-mental entity or "object"; and in so far, it shares in the objections to which such a doctrine is exposed. These go back in particular to one fundamental matter of dispute; is it so that the immediate "objects" of knowledge consist of qualitative "natures," or essences? This is truer to appearances than to say that we know *sensations*; but it still does not naturally fit the facts. Qualia, for common sense, *characterize* the object of perception; they do not constitute it. We *seem* to know concrete existences, qualified in various ways; and it is forcing language to speak of red or sour as an "object." It is only as we thus reinterpret sense experience, however, that the distinctive tenet of neo-realism gets a standing. On the more natural showing, "qualia" may indeed be literally present in experience,—indeed "dualism" in its own way would assent

to this,—but “objects” are plainly not so conceived; and the outcome is, accordingly, the need to reduce reality from existence to logical natures, on which comments already have been made.

It should be added here that Russell himself would not allow that there is any point to this objection; the new logic has already shown it to be groundless. The difficulty is only met, however, by the device already noted—by *redefining* existence, that is. And the presuppositions of this new definition are quite different from the simpler and more familiar meaning of the term. Russell has confessedly in mind the “existence theorem” of mathematics—that, for example, “an even prime exists.”<sup>1</sup> And used in such a connection, it is no doubt possible to define existence as the property of a propositional function—an expression, that is, containing one or more undetermined constituents, and becoming a proposition as soon as the undetermined constituents are determined. So interpreted, the statement that “men exist” may be translated into the form, “there are values of  $x$  for which the propositional function ‘ $x$  is a man’ is true”; this is all one means by saying “there are men.” And having thus ruled that existence shall have just this meaning, and no other, it is a simple matter to conclude that particular objects do not “exist”; the statement that they do exist is not so much false as meaningless, since we have limited the application of the term to something that is never a particular. But it seems evident that this is to ignore the alternative position, rather than to disprove it; if the issue involves a possible sense attaching to existence which lies beyond the realm of logic,—a meaning everywhere implicated, at any rate, in the practical life which Russell disparages,—it cannot be settled by starting from a purely logical property. And even the definition itself, when we pass from logic to common life, does not succeed in escaping the problem. “There is a value of  $x$  for which ‘ $x$  is a man’ is true,” will still seem

<sup>1</sup> *Monist*, Vol. XXIX, p. 348.



to the unsophisticated to mean, "some particular instance *exists* to make the general claim a true one." And to avoid this, it is necessary, again, to construct a whole new theory of reality, for which "sense data," and "facts," stand for ultimate and undefinable entities; and this brings up once more the same questions with which we started.

7. Russell's own more specific doctrine of sense data, in its later developments, appears to be a compromise. It still starts from the doubtful thesis that the original objects of sense perception are qualia, and not things; without this, the presumption in favor of logical construction would come much less easily. But in taking these qualia now as momentary facts dependent on the organism, the notion of the "physical" is considerably complicated. Their infinite number and variety is in the first place to be reckoned with as a drawback—a quale for every possible standpoint of every possible kind of organism; nor is the relation of actual to possible data left very plain. One interesting consequence is the explanation of "unreal" objects; ghosts and centaurs are things equally real with trees and mountains, except that they cannot be correlated in the same space construction,—an explanation convenient for a theory of error, but not intrinsically convincing. Meanwhile logically, also, the situation is at least confused when we find these ultimate qualia, out of which all objects are constructed, themselves made dependent upon the causal activity of common-sense objects—the sense organ and the environment.

There remain, it may be added, two speculative possibilities for the interpretation of sense data—either to cease trying to find any distinctive status for sensibles as opposed to universals, and to reduce everything alike explicitly to pure logic—a path which certain of the American neo-realists are inclined to follow,—or else to abandon the neo-realistic distinction between sense data and sensations, and return to sensationalism. This last alternative is already suggested in Russell's theoretical preference for solipsism; and it is the doctrine which he

adopts explicitly in his latest volume.<sup>1</sup> But in thus abandoning the neo-realistic conception of "awareness," at least the foundation for our knowledge of a realm of logical entities would seem to call for reconsideration.

#### § 4. *American Neo-Realism. Perry. Holt*

1. In America, neo-realism first became a generally recognized philosophical tendency through the publication, in 1912, of a coöperative volume by six writers, called *The New Realism*; though for some years before this it had been trying itself out in a more tentative fashion in the philosophical journals. In just what relation it ought to be regarded as standing to English neo-realism, it is a little difficult to determine. The American group is plainly influenced very greatly by the logical doctrines of Russell, even more so on the whole than the majority of his English colleagues; it agrees, also, in discarding sensations and images as psychical existents, and insists upon the identical presence of the object in knowledge. But the interpretation of consciousness itself takes an entirely different turn. The mental act of awareness which has so fundamental a place in British neo-realism is abandoned altogether, and instead there is adopted a behavioristic metaphysics, where, a bodily response takes the place of the peculiar entity called awareness, and mind is conceived as a composite made up of the organism which reacts selectively to a cross section of the world, and of the objects to which it thus responds, these last being identical with the "content" of consciousness. The various essays in the book show indeed a certain amount of divergence, which on the whole has tended to increase since the book's appearance; and the position of W. P. Montague, in particular, with its attempt to explain consciousness in terms of energy, and knowledge as the relation of self-transcending

<sup>1</sup> *The Analysis of Mind.*

implication which brain states sustain to their extra-organic causes, has no obvious community with the "search-light" conception to which most of the others subscribe. But on a number of general points there is a fairly exact agreement:—that the being and the nature of objects of knowledge are not conditioned on their being known; that these objects are directly present to the knowing consciousness, and are not mediated by sensations or ideas numerically distinct from them; that epistemology is not logically fundamental to science or metaphysics; that an entity possesses some relations independently of others, so that it is not necessary to know all of its relations in order to know any of them; that analysis, consequently, is the true method of philosophy, as against the anti-intellectualism of some modern philosophers; that entities may have being in a Platonic sense which is neither physical nor psychical, but "neutral"; and that there is empirically a presumption in favor of pluralism rather than of monism.

2. The psychological implications of the behavioristic theory of knowledge have been most fully explored by R. B. Perry. The theory is, to repeat, that the knower is the physical organism. This organism reacts to certain selected parts of the environment, and *thereby* constitutes these portions the content of knowledge; the same identical objects exist also as physical facts, and all that happens to them, when they become conscious, is that they get a special connection, a special grouping, through their relation to the reacting body. The whole situation accordingly is interpretable without going beyond the realities with which the physical sciences deal, and having to assume a special sort of reality called consciousness, or knowledge, or the psychical. The psychical is only the physical related in a peculiar fashion; and the same methods of external observation that are sufficient in the physical sciences, can be applied to the psychological life of mind as well.

Behaviorism as an ideal of method applied to the actual

science of psychology it is not necessary to bring in question here. It undoubtedly supplies a convenient mode of approach to certain problems; though it is probable that the zeal for innovation has led it to make much wider claims than will eventually be sustained. But even were it finally to prove sufficient for the needs of psychology as a special science, philosophy would still have to justify it in the light of larger considerations. And when we try to defend the conception as an ultimate creed, it will appear to begin with that all the facts appealed to are capable of being construed in a different way, which retains the traditional prejudice in favor of an "inner" life, not open directly to the gaze of an observer. It is true, as the behaviorist contends, that in the particular field of conscious experience which we call sense perception, the objects perceived are identical with the part of the environment to which the perceiving organism is related in the way of response; and since an observer can himself perceive this organic reaction along with approximately the same field of objects, he can tell directly, within certain limits of error, what the content of my mind at the moment is. Equally, though with much more chance of mistake, he can, without necessarily asking for information from his subject, interpret the purposes of a human agent, by watching to see how he reacts to things bodily. But once grant our ability on any terms to know real objects, and there is a perfectly simple way, again, of accounting for this; it is because the observer has himself the same inner experience, in an identical situation, that he finds the content of knowledge which reveals the external world the same for him as for his subject, rather than because physical facts, in special relationships, displace the mental altogether.

And to this latter thesis there are positive objections that appeal strongly to common sense. In the first place our natural judgment would unquestionably be, that whatever may be true of "things," other persons do at least have something in

the nature of ideas, sensations, feelings, which are not identically present in my consciousness, and which can never be. Perry consistently discards this conviction as a mistaken prejudice, but without notable success in placating common sense.<sup>1</sup> What in the end his argument comes to is, that we do as a matter of fact know the very same pain, the very same idea, of which our neighbor is conscious, since otherwise our minds would never meet on common ground; and if the case is actually so, it is inconsistent with the supposition that consciousness is "private" to a single person. Now if a thing be reducible to its logical nature or description, as neo-realism tends to hold, the conclusion is a fair one; the same logical content that characterizes the pain is indeed present to my knowing consciousness, else I could not know it for what it is. But on the more familiar supposition that the *existence* of a fact is something over and above its descriptive characteristics, sameness of content ceases to identify the two experiences. And most people it will be impossible to argue out of the conviction that there is a reality, a tang, a feeling presence, which sharply separates the pain my neighbor feels from any idea of it that I can possibly form; and that this actual pain is something that never is brought within the circle of what I myself directly experience.

About an "idea" there is more chance that the plain man may find himself confused by argument, since an idea, in one of its meanings, may be regarded as itself just a bit of logical content; it is possible to say therefore, in a more literal sense, that we have the "same" idea. But still it would commonly be recognized that, in addition to the identity of abstract content, there is also the psychological fact—the awareness of having an idea; and *as* a psychological existence, this is still different in the two cases. And as a reply to this the logical consideration in which Perry finds the source of our mistaken prejudice—the failure to recognize, namely, that an identical

<sup>1</sup> *Present Philosophical Tendencies*, pp. 286 ff

element can belong to more than one complex at the same time—is quite irrelevant, since it is itself interpreted in a way that begs the question. It is true that the same *a* may be the second letter in man, and the fifth in mortal, *if* we abstract from *a*'s actual existence, and think of it only in its character as denoting a certain sound; as an actual letter in actual printed words, however, the *a*'s are *not* the same, and the illustration turns against its user.

3. Meanwhile from the side of the organic activity, or response, there is difficulty of another sort in adapting behaviorism to the accepted understanding of experience—a difficulty brought out more especially when we turn to the ideal elements in knowledge. If I open my eyes to my surroundings, an observer can tell what I see, because he is seeing the same things for himself; if I close my eyes, and allow my thoughts to range, I have at least rendered his task much more arduous and uncertain. The neo-realist will reply that in so far as I can get at the incipient muscular contractions which are involved in thinking,—or, as he would say, which *are* thought,—I am again in a position to tell directly what is in my neighbor's mind. But at least when we pass thus from things to words, the situation takes a turn that is not without possibilities of trouble. Articulation is to be sure a form of behavior; though it might seem the natural thing to call it a response to an interlocutor, rather than to the content of the idea. But at any rate, from the standpoint of an observer, the situation is appreciably different in the two cases. Since the observer has himself no way of seeing an ideal content, but envisages only the "activity" aspect of mind, external observation is no longer a sufficient method for getting directly at the inner life; "having an idea" becomes in terms of its *content* a quite different experience from observing a word reaction, whereas when I perceive a *perception*, the observing experience *is* supposed to have the same content as the perception itself. In so far as an idea leads to some future dealing with its object, by awaiting the

issue an observer might indeed immediately perceive the idea's content. But the perception of a chain of physical processes which end in an object's presence after an indefinite lapse of time, is still utterly unlike the immediate experience of "having an idea"; in it the future fact is evidently not present at the start as an existent content, whereas the "idea" does have for me a present content, which more or less adequately forecasts or represents the future one, and to which the biological process open to the observer bears descriptively not the slightest resemblance.

Accordingly, to fit the facts, we must enlarge our notion of response, and, since any possible object of knowledge can be present "in idea," must find a way to interpret its relation to response in present rather than in future terms, unless we are prepared to reduce "thought," prior to its completion in action, to the bare muscular contraction of speaking, which every one knows that really it is not. Now English neo-realism, interpreted as the "awareness" of a Platonic world of timeless being, may perhaps compass this; but for behaviorism it apparently is possible only by abandoning the notion of biological response in any sense that gives it scientific value. Metaphysically, Perry saves his theory from the charge of materialism, with which otherwise it might excusably be confused, by holding that the physical is itself subordinate to more ultimate logical entities. But his whole theory of knowledge rests upon a physical fact, the organism; its scientific plausibility is dependent upon this. And the sense in which a physical body, in scientific terms, and without having recourse to notions that leave the physical fact behind, can respond to an abstract logical hypothesis, or to a comprehensive ethical ideal, or to an event in the future or the past, without any interposition of "ideas," is at least something that cannot be taken for granted as requiring no special explanation. An animal may respond to an abstraction in this sense, that what sets off his action is some partial feature of an object which he

observes,—for example, a particular shape or a particular shade of color; there is no great difficulty so long as something real is present in the environment which has this special character. But how does the physical organism pick out of its environment the ideal of Plato's republic, or the square root of minus one? Perry simplifies his own task by keeping usually within the range of situations where biology, as a non-metaphysical science, moves; and were we to stop with materialism, this would be legitimate. But if the metaphysics of realism is to be taken as logical rather than identified with physics, a new and difficult set of problems will need to be faced.

4. A sketch of what the program of reducing the universe to logical or neutral entities might be like, is suggested by another of the six realists, E. B. Holt. From such a standpoint, Being appears as the ultimate category, and everything alike has being of which it is possible to think at all. Philosophy attempts to give unity of system to the realm of being, by means of the property of "activity" which belongs to logical propositions, and through which they generate terms; this relation of a generating proposition to the series of terms which satisfy its demands is the solution of the problem of the one and the many. The ideal of philosophy would be a single rigidly deductive system, where a few logical propositions, or even one, generate all the multitudinous detail of the world we know. The particular purpose of Holt's book is to apply this ideal of method to the concept of consciousness in particular, and to show thereby the validity of the "search-light" theory of behaviorism.

In its actual carrying out, however, the method develops certain limitations. In the first place, it does not even make a pretence of deducing the particular facts of the world—the rock on which logical theories of reality have always foundered; what it is actually concerned with is *concepts* simply, and the definition of complex concepts in logically simpler terms, each



new state of complexity in the world being reducible to the same neutral elements that appear in the preceding stage, and, in the end, to a few logical indefinables. Thus, presupposing that we have been successful in reaching the stage of organic mechanism, we need to show that from some character of this we can deduce just those characteristics that empirically we find belonging to what we are acquainted with as consciousness; and this we accomplish through the notion of selective response to limited aspects of the—ultimately neutral—environment. Even in this conceptual sense the method meets many difficulties; one notable difficulty, for example, is the case of quality. If we were to accept qualitative differences as they seem to exist for experience, we obviously should have something incapable of being analyzed without remainder into the terms that describe energetic, and, ultimately, spatial and logical systems; and accordingly Holt eliminates qualitative natures from the world, and reduces them to the “density” of physiological series.

But now even supposing the work accomplished of defining all concepts in a few ultimate logical terms, we have still the more searching task of making plausible the thesis that these differing terms, with their including propositions, are all there is to the universe, and that “reality” and “existence” are themselves nothing but special complications of such logical entities. And the more successful we are in thus reducing reality to a logical formula, the less capable in a way is this formula of solving our difficulty as to how an organism can respond to absent, and ideal, and non-existent entities, simply because it has itself no place for actual organisms,—which alone respond to anything,—but only for the *concept* organism, and the concept of response. But because the physical can be *defined* in logical terms, it does not follow that it can be reduced to such logical terms without remainder, unless we have already prejudged a vital point in metaphysics; for a definition only pretends to

cover the "nature" of things, and not to be interchangeable with the things themselves.

5. Two other members of the original group of realists have contributed to the recent literature of the movement, W. T. Marvin in the form of elementary text books, and E. G. Spaulding in a more pretentious volume, which contains perhaps the most thorough criticism yet attempted of rival philosophies from a neo-realistic point of view. Spaulding's form of realism, however, shows signs of development in several directions. The main thesis of the book is still the doctrine of "external relations" as applied to knowledge, and the need of substituting for the traditional logical emphasis on substance and causality the newer logic of relational implication; and the fact that for any form of philosophy there is at least one instance where the object of knowledge must be taken realistically as independent of its being known,—the state of affairs, namely, which this philosophy defends as true,—serves to justify the realistic doctrine, and to convict its rivals of being self-refuting. The relational theory of consciousness, however, including its behavioristic form, seems to be given up by Spaulding, in favor of a somewhat obscure conception of consciousness as a "dimension"—a theory which again assumes that because a thing can be *defined* as having certain characteristics, we have the right to stop with these in stating what we mean by its existence. Spaulding's notion of "truth" as a relation of correspondence between the existent and the "subsistent" is also an innovation, and seems to be looking back to a position conceived by neo-realists generally to have been outgrown. The correspondence is not with the "mental," to be sure, since the subsistent is just as truly non-mental as the physical is. But this avoidance of the older "dualistic" realism—necessary if we are not to give up all that is distinctive in neo-realistic claims—is effected only at the expense of putting truth and error wholly outside the realm of *belief*—a mental fact—where they are ordinarily taken as residing.

§ 5. *Conclusion*

1. Neo-realism is the latest of the speculative tendencies that have arisen to the dignity of a recognized school, though it does not by any means exhaust the philosophical permutations that recent years have brought forth. In America, more particularly, where the authority of tradition is weaker, and a more open mind is apt to be shown to contemporary winds of doctrine, there are a number of recent philosophers who stand somewhat apart from the various competing systems, and attempt to profit from them all alike. Thus J. E. Boodin calls his philosophy a pragmatic realism. Boodin finds five irreducible characters of reality—a “stuff”—being—conceived in the form of active energy complexes, time, space, consciousness, and form or selective direction. Consciousness is interpreted as an “awareness” which lights up reality in spots; it is not the essential character of the “self,” which is a group of active conative tendencies, coöperating as a form of energy with other energies in the physical world. In Dewitt H. Parker, a closer approach is made to neo-realism. Parker draws a distinction between self, and mind. The self is a set of activities which, by coming into the presence of a sensuous content, makes this a portion of an individual mind; these sensations, meanwhile, are themselves objective facts independent of perceiving, though not independent of the body, whose coöperation is called for in their production. The same content may figure in any number of different minds, which thus join in its control; and we may reasonably interpret the natural object in so far as it seems to exist when human beings are not perceiving it, as likewise in the form of sensations suffering the control of extra-human activities, capable of being interpreted after the analogy of a self. There is no direct contact between one self and another, comparable to the connection of activities within a self. But different selves are indirectly con-

nected through the sense elements which are their common termini; and this overlapping of minds supplies a basis for their communication and interaction. In D. C. Macintosh, again, a theory of the identical presence of an independent reality in perception, conceived as necessary in order to avoid agnosticism, is combined with a claim that certain qualities of the real object, the secondary qualities, it does not possess when it is not perceived, but acquires through the creative activity of the psychical subject. Here the ultimate interest is a religious one, and issues in a vindication of God as an immediate object of empirical experience.

2. If the historian of the future is to be in a position to find a dramatic tendency in the evolution of philosophy, it is clearly not in the year 1922 that his plot will culminate. The almost feverish activity of the last few decades is in striking contrast to the apathy with which the nineteenth century opened; but the universe still seems as far from having come to the consciousness of its own rationality in the philosophical, as in the political field. Only an optimist, or a convinced partisan, is likely to find in the discussions of the present moment the resolution of that uncertainty and lack of common agreement which has so often been used to put the philosopher apologetically on the defensive. In spite of what is perhaps a growing disposition on the part of members of one school to learn in matters of detail from another, the philosophical atmosphere is still sharply controversial rather than coöperative, and the leading schools all diverge at the very outset by insisting on the adoption of a special, and usually a more or less non-natural standpoint, before the pupil can be instructed in the one true faith. Occasionally a voice is raised against the proprietary attitude in philosophic doctrine, in the interests of greater catholicity. This is true, for example, of a recent volume by W. S. Sheldon. But the particular solution offered, in terms of the mutual interdependence of external and internal relations,—or, put more simply, in terms of the need for

recognizing the claims alike of the persistence or integrity of every actual aspect of experience, and of its development under the conditions imposed upon it by the environment—is somewhat too abstract to show the way clearly to a reform.

William James has perhaps indicated where a start toward agreement might be made; if the philosopher would be more frank in confessing to the human interests which guide his search for truth, it might be that these competing interests, brought into the open, would prove less obnoxious to one another than a comparison of their outcome in terms of logic merely would suggest. Even here, however, a twist might be given to the matter unduly pleasing to the sceptic. Why not, it might be asked, admit at once that a philosophical system is nothing but a work of art, an attempt to give some favorite emotional reaction a logical body and expression such as will gratify our sense of speculative consistency. Once recognize that a philosophy is not the one exclusive truth about reality, but the gratification of a cosmic mood, and it will appear that the rivalry of systems has no foundation. This seems to be the attitude recommended in the speculative essays of a recent candid friend, rather than lover of philosophy, L. P. Jacks. The true angle of approach to philosophy is from the side of the universe, rather than of man as a thinking animal. The world is not to be regarded as a Sphinx engaged in setting problems for us to solve, but as an immediately satisfying work of art, in which speculative activities have indeed a place, but only along with other forms of living. A philosophy which aims to cover reality must not forget, accordingly, to find a place for itself also within the universal scheme; and thereby it becomes, not an impersonal passer of judgment on the world, but itself one form among others of the world's activities. In other words, as an expression of the cosmic whole, philosophy is not *my* philosophy, superior in truth to, and destined to take the place of, all the rest; it is the entire history of philosophic thinking as a part of the dramatic output of the universe.

But now is such a theory itself also only another figure in the universal drama? This can be professed in words, but it seems very doubtful whether in reality higher pretensions for it can be avoided. And at least the philosopher himself can scarcely afford to recognize that his results are nothing but an exercise in logic built about a special mood, if he is to retain very long his pleasure in philosophizing. That this is what systems of philosophy have often been, it would be difficult to deny entirely; and probably to the end, since we are dealing with matters for which no decisive verification is conceivable, individual preferences will help determine for each man what vision of reality will seem most sane and reasonable, and philosophers will never quite see eye to eye. And of course so long as the tendency prevails to insist on ruling out as meaningless problems that appeal to other minds, in the interest of some exclusive vision, no agreement can come about till all philosophers are converted to a single system; and no one who knows philosophers can reasonably expect this to happen soon. But if a fraction of the effort once were made to enter into the difficulties and the insights of other thinkers that now goes to following out the logical consequences of a single insight and defending it against competitors, philosophers might fairly be expected to discover that logical agreement, like ethical agreement, is less improbable than the particularism of our first and natural instincts might lead us to suppose; since it is in fact to a narrow and exclusive sense of what is valuable, rather than to rational considerations, that this philosophic particularism is most always due. "Systems" would probably suffer in the process; but systems have had their chance, and have still to show their ability to cure the ills of philosophy.

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